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CREATIVE RELIGIOUS LITERATURE

A NEW LITERARY STUDY OF THE BIBLE

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BY

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IN HIRAM COLLEGE

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PREFACE

THIS book is the outgrowth of a personal experience and an educational experiment combined. The experience had its origin in requests from various groups of ministers and religious workers for fresh and original courses of lectures on biblical subjects. That led to a series of studies on the various types of biblical literature, such as folk-songs, legends, and short stories, parables and allegories, lyric poetry, dramatic symbols and visions, speeches and essays. These studies aroused such widespread interest that the author evolved a new college course on similar lines.

This experience coincided with a study of the college curriculum with a view to bringing both the content and method of teaching into closer grips with modern life. Out of this investigation, supplemented by other suggestions, arose the idea of studying some of the great masterpieces of general literature in connection with the Bible and thus relating the biblical courses more closely to the intellectual life of the students. As a result of the spontaneous and ever increasing interest taken in the course, a further development of the idea followed in the form of the present book.

Like all growths the book owes much to its friendly environment. Ministers, students, and faculty colleagues have contributed their bit. A number of friends have read portions of the manuscript. My colleague, Professor Ralph H. Goodale, has given valuable aid in connection with the discussion of Ecclesiastes. Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver has read the manuscript and has given very helpful suggestions as to the Hebrew background and interpretation. The author is most deeply indebted of all to his colleague in the field of Religious Literature, Professor Marion H. Dunsmore, who has critically read the entire manuscript and given invaluable help.

A. J. C

HIRAM, OHIO,
December, 1929.

INTRODUCTION

The study of Biblical Literature here presented combines two methods. The first is the study of the literature by types, such as folk-songs and early ballads, short stories, fables, parables and allegories, lyric poetry, dramatic and epic forms, visions and symbols, and such prose forms as biography and history, maxims of wisdom, oratory and the essay. The Bible exhibits as wide a variety of literary form as can well be found. Some of these forms—as for example the parable—it has carried to a degree of perfection unattained elsewhere. A study of this character rigidly carried out will throw new light on the literature, make for critical analysis, and lead to intelligent appreciation. The choicer examples will be studied with sufficient detail to reveal their delicate shades of beauty, their nuances of meaning, and their clarity of expression. A study thus carried through should achieve the end sought—a critical appreciation of biblical literature.

The second feature of the method is the comparison of the biblical material with other literature of the same type or theme. A wide variety of the best literature of many peoples is suggested for comparison with the biblical classics. The student may study the folk-songs of a score of peoples to discover the common elements of primitive folk-lore. He will find much in common between the indigenous American negro spirituals and the Hebrew folk-songs. He will be able to compare the Hebrew Psalms with other lyrics of faith and trust or joy and sorrow. Throughout he will discover that the Hebrews developed certain literary forms to a very high degree, while in others they were surpassed by their neighbors.

It is hoped that such comparisons will be as stimulating to those who use the book as they have been in the writer's classroom experience.

This method of approach will present the literary masterpieces of the Scriptures in their original freshness, vigor, and spontaneity, and will have the further merit of associating the Bible with the rest of our literary heritage. Too often the Bible has been looked upon as something apart from the main stream of our intellectual life and progress. Its study in college has been viewed by the student as a concession to the church or to the traditions of the school—a good thing no doubt but in no way vital to his cultural development. Ask any person to list the world's ten greatest writers and he or she will never think of Paul or Amos or the author of Job. The omission is not due to any intentional depreciation, but simply to the fact that the great biblical writers have been associated with religion and not with literature. The aim of this book, then, is to present the Bible as literature, so that it may be associated with and thought of as part of our literary inheritance. When once Ecclesiastes is studied in connection with nineteenth century pessimism, upon which it exerted such a profound influence, this Old Testament book will no longer be thought of as outside the line of our cultural heritage. Such a study will humanize our ideas of the Bible and at the same time give us a new literary perspective.

A comparison of the great literature of the Bible with the classics of other peoples and cultures will also yield a new conception of the universality of religious faith and aspiration. It will make possible an airplane view, so to speak, of the religious landscape of the ages. The comparative study of religions is liberalizing, and surely a comparative study of the great classics of Christian and non-Christian peoples should be not less so. One notes how common and recurring are the themes of God and man, faith and trust, providence and human destiny. No one can compare the *Prometheus Bound* of Æschylus, the *Job* of the Old Testament, and the *Faust* of Goethe without realizing how each age must grapple anew with the same old problems. The great crossroads of human experience are quite the same among all peoples.

A final word as to details. The selections listed in each chapter under the heading "For Comparison and Study" are intended to be suggestive, not exhaustive. They have the merit of being available in most college and public libraries. Those who wish to carry the study further can of course find plenty of additional material. References to volume and page are not given, as such would be valid only for particular editions. The bibliographies at the end of each chapter have to do only with the discussion of the biblical material and are also only suggestive. Good biblical histories or works of introduction should be used. Commentaries may be used as needed, each reader consulting those available. The student should freely supplement the textbook discussion with the fuller treatment found in other works.

The greatest freedom in reading and research is to be encouraged. Topics and themes for research are given; others will arise in the discussion. In class work different members may make individual studies of the outside material and bring their results to the class. The method is meant to be inductive.

of life and duty, providence and human destiny. No one can compare the *Prometheus Bound* of Aeschylus, the *Job* of the Old Testament, and the *Faust* of Goethe without seeing how each great people deals with the same eternal problems. The great crossroads of human experience are quite the same among all peoples, [illegible] individual as to details. The exercises listed in each chapter under the heading "For Comparison and Study" are intended to be suggestive, not exhaustive. They have the merit of being available in most college and public libraries. Those who wish to carry the study further will easily find plenty of additional material. References to volume and page are not given, as such would be valid only for particular editions. The bibliographies at the end of each chapter are to be read with the discussion of the individual books and are also only suggestive. Good biblical histories or works of introduction should be used. Commentaries may be used as needed, each teacher consulting those available. The student should freely supplement the textbook discussion with the fuller treatment found in other works.

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CREATIVE RELIGIOUS LITERATURE

CREATIVE RELIGIOUS LITERATURE

CHAPTER I

THE LITERATURE OF THE BIBLE

1. The Creative Spirit in Art

All the things that we do are acts either of creation or of repetition. Acts of repetition form the staple of the day's activity and constitute the habits and conventions of life. Those new acts which we dignify by the term creative are performed by an effort of the will in response to some felt need, and the man who thus fashions some new thing is an artist. In its essence and widest scope art is the creation of something new in response to some felt need of the body or of the spirit. The man who builds a house to shelter his family is as truly an artist as is he who paints a picture or sings a song in response to the needs of his soul. In all the wide range of creation from the pioneer's hut to the city's cathedral, from the rude scratches on the cave walls of prehistoric man to the sublime works on a Michelangelo, or from the folk-songs of a tribal feast to Beethoven's *Symphony in A*, we have the creative spirit in man responding to his needs.

Let us inquire a little more closely what is the essential thing in all art. What is the common factor that appeals to us in such works as the Parthenon or the Laocoön Group, in Raphael's *Sistine Madonna*, in Brahm's *Symphony in G Minor*, or in Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind"? Is it not that in each there is present a certain type of energy—a form of spiritual energy which is not merely the expression of the emotions of the artist but is a new creation? We are thus made aware of a reservoir of power of a very high order. In the presence of such art our vague and undefined spiritual needs not only become articulate but at the same time are satisfied.

The artist must therefore possess two things. First, he must have a surplus of spiritual energy welling up within him, a surging creative urge or impulse. All art is spontaneous and impulsive. In a letter to a friend Keats speaks of preferring to leap headlong into the sea in *Endymion* rather than to stay on the shore and pipe his safe but silly pipe. He exclaims, "That which is creative must create itself." There is a sense of inevitableness haunting the artist. The Old Testament prophets sang with abandon because they conceived of themselves as mere instruments in the hands of God. This sense of being laid hold on is common to religion and to art.

In the second place, when the artist is in this state of surplus creative energy some great impression must come to him and he must express that impression artistically. To produce a work of art is an exhausting and heart-rending task. The Orient has emphasized the passive mood of the poet and prophet. Its seers have a feeling of resignation to a higher power, of letting themselves go, and of becoming the media of the divine or the creative spirit. The West has more largely stressed the active or expressive attitude without always giving sufficient time for that inner integration of spirit and clarity of vision which can come only from meditation. Clutton-Brock says, "Many artists fail through mere willfulness. The painter tries to find his picture in the visible world before he has laid his mind open to its beauty . . . . before reality has had time to stir and enrich his mind." [1]

True art, then, implies both the creative energy and the significant impression. In the media in which they are embodied the arts serve as storehouses of spiritual energy available for the spiritual enrichment of the race. Speaking of the arts President Wilkins, of Oberlin College, says, "They are themselves means for the enlargement of life—products and reservoirs of surplus energy, perennially ready, with due mediation to pour their treasures into new lives.[2] Art is the major source of the creative spiritual energy of the race. It is a fountain for reënforcing our spiritual ideals and stimulating the appreciation of the true and the beautiful.

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[1] **Quoted from Daniel Gregory Mason, *Artistic Ideals*, p. 47.**

Granting, then, the impulse to creative expression on the part of the artist, there must also be creative response on the part of the audience. Literature as one of the arts is the chief means whereby the phenomena of experience which seemed significant to one human group in the past are passed on to other groups in other times and places. This "passing on" is of the essence of art. The poet has by the magic of his phrase and the mystery of his images fashioned a concrete reality, and this reality transforms in the reader what was vague and only partially felt into something definite and real.

The audience, real or imagined, becomes one of the shaping forces of art. Especially is this true in literature. The artist is continually swinging between two poles, that of self-expression and that of self-communication. In his penetrating essay on "The Artist and His Audience" Clutton-Brock refers to Whistler's dictum that "art is not a social activity at all" and to Tolstoy's extremer statement that "it is nothing else," and comes to the conclusion that the truth lies between the two extremes. "There is," he continues, "a necessary relation between a work of art and its audience even if no actual audience for it exists; and the fact that this relation must be even when there is no audience in existence is the paradox and the problem of Art. . . . Art is not merely expression but also a means

[2] Ernest H. Wilkins, *The Changing College,* p. 19.

of address."[3] We shall see how largely folk-songs, for example, are a social product.

But the actual audience of the artist is not the ideal one, and he must ever appeal from the persistent present with its cheap demand for quick results to the less insistent but more responsive past and future. Only as the artist communes with the great spirits of the past will he become skillful in expression and universal in appeal. Emerson reveled in the fact of his "steady effort to hold himself and his contemporaries under the searching cross lights of human experience." And there is also the audience of the future. The future incites hope, and without hope art is dead. Wordsworth must have had the audience of the artist in mind when he said:

> There is
> One great society alone on earth:
> The noble living and the noble dead.

He might have added, "The noble yet-to-be-born." Art is timeless.

Religion, like art, arises from a felt need in the life of man. In this whirring and confused world where materialism appeals to man's vanity, cupidity and lust, and where "jazzing it up" is an ugly phrase to describe our parody of living in a continual itch of restlessness, we need a power outside ourselves to give us inner peace, clarity of mind, and serenity of spirit. If this need be present—and who can doubt it?—then religion is that response of man to some truth outside himself and some power not of himself which can give to him such poise, such integration of personality, and such inner sources of spiritual strength as will give meaning to life. Both the worshiper and the artist, as Stevenson has pointed out, must rely upon inner resources and rise above petty concerns. Religion moreover takes a third step which art must likewise take, both going forward in submission of the will to that power which is the source of this inner renewal. We find this submission in the sense of divine mastery which characterized the Old Testament prophets and in the humility of the artist before the great realities of life. What the muses were to the Greek poets Jehovah was to the Hebrew lyricists. Worldliness is the sense of mastery over material things; art and religion transcend the material and are under the mastery of the spirit. This sense of need, of inner renewal, and of being laid hold on by the divine is common to religion and art.

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[3] Daniel G. Mason, *Artistic Ideals,* p. 65.

Just as there is this community of spirit between the religious seer and the artist, so there is a likeness in the individual's response to the masterpieces of art and religion. It is the business of the teacher so to introduce the student to art that he may partake of its creative energy through the response to it made by his own awakening mind. The magic rebirth of beauty comes to every seeking and responsive soul. In the same way the individual responds to the creative religious geniuses of the world. What is needed is not argument nor dogmatic fiat but opportunity for the mind and heart to catch the creative and radiating energy of prophets and seers and above all of Jesus, as it is mediated through the imperishable literature of the Bible. As Dr. Fosdick has said, in one of his inimitable illustrations, the members of an orchestra would not try to coerce people into the appreciation of music by breaking their violins over their stupid heads. They would simply play the music. Neither should religion be taught by argument, authority, or dogma. Like music it should be left to arouse its own proper response as it impinges upon awakened minds.

2. THE BIBLE AS CREATIVE LITERATURE

The Bible comes to us as a canonical book. Councils of men in seats of ecclesiastical authority have set aside these sixty-six books as the Word of God, putting upon them their imprint of final authority as to faith and morals. One may ask whether this is not of doubtful value to the Bible. Canonicity and authority have legal and ecclesiastical connotations which are foreign to the spirit of the prophet and the singer. It is at least doubtful whether Jesus would have wished that external authority be attributed to his words. His teachings fell upon the hearts of the disciples as freely as the sunshine upon the wayside. They were part of the life and of the landscape and of the day. Whoever first sang the twenty-third Psalm did not have a weather eye on posterity nor on approving councils. The realm of the poets and singers is a glorious and free democracy. We should cultivate devout appreciation for both the beauty and the religion of these classics, but our day shows little respect for mere external authority and coming generations will have still less. It may be to the advantage of the Bible to rid it of the false claims to authority with which we have invested it and let its beauty and truth make their intrinsic appeal to every waiting mind.

There are those who look askance at any except a devotional study of the Bible. Others are primarily interested in a historical, textual, or critical treatment. These are very good and we are indebted to the whole line of scholars whose varied critical researches form the foundation on which every sane study of the Scriptures must be founded. We respect the ladder by which we have risen. But sometimes we feel that scholars have fixed their attention on the bones rather than on the life enclosing them. Spiritual and moral realities count for most, but it is also true that what arouses human beings to such truth is contact with great personalities as revealed in their significant experiences. The Hebrews were blessed with a line of prophets unmatched in their perception of divine truth and its cogent expression. Moreover, the converse of this proposition is also true. Where there is a great literature there must have been a great experience. Just as some who readily comprehend the deep religious experiences of the prophets will be led to appreciate the beauty of their language, so others, sensitive to the finest in literature, will pass from the poetic expression to the appreciation of the religious experience lying back of it. There are those who feel that a study of the Bible as mere literature is in a sense out of keeping with its divine message, but nothing could be further from the truth. The fact that works of perfect art are the media of the divine revelation provides a better proof of the inspiration of the Bible than the strongest dogmatic arguments or the most exact historical criticism could possibly supply.

We shall try, then, to study this literature and enter into these experiences in the light in which first they glowed. "The literature of a people," says James Russell Lowell, "should be the record of its joys and its sorrows, its aspirations and its shortcomings, its wisdom and its folly, the confidant of its soul." Historical study shall be our servant to acquaint us with necessary facts, but never our master to dictate our method. In his *Twice-Told Tales* Hawthorne tells us that if his readers wish to see any beauty in his stories they must read them "in the clear brown twilight atmosphere in which they were first written; if they are opened in the sunshine they are apt to look exceedingly like a volume of blank pages." In the same way we shall try to study the Bible, its folk-lore, its songs of the vineyard, its lyrics of joy and dirges of sorrow, its stories told at the gates of the city and its proverbs and parables growing along the waysides of experience. If we are successful its wild poetic prophecies, its passionate Oriental phrases, its quaint and pathetic stories, and its transcendent flashes of imagery will insinuate themselves into our imagination and make their impress on our lives.

Books to Consult

ABBOTT, LYMAN, *The Life and Literature of the Ancient Hebrews,* Chap. 1.
CLUTTON-BROCK, ARTHUR, *The Artist and His Audience.*
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MASON, DANIEL G., *Artistic Ideals.*
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WILD, LAURA, *A Literary Guide to the Bible,* Chap. 1.

CHAPTER II

FOLK-SONGS OF THE BIBLE

1. The Nature of Folk-Lore

By folk-lore we usually mean all those ways of doing things, those customs, rites, and festivals, expressed in song and story, which make up the cultural and social world in which primitive man lived. It is the warp and woof of his life; the social expression of their common life by the tribe or group. In this chapter we shall study those bits of song and poetry which give the earliest reflections of the social and communal life of the Hebrew people, reserving for a succeeding chapter a study of the myths which are primitive man's naïve guesses at the mystery of the world. Those who have become accustomed to the principle of development in the literature of the Bible need not be told that folk-lore is the earliest literary effort of the Hebrews. Primitive peoples did not analyze their lives into sections, labeling one religious, another social, and a third industrial. Not only the things pertaining to their gods but all the activities of their lives were a part of their religion. In the Bible we hear the piping of the shepherds and the songs of the harvesters. If we were to visit the festivals centering about the culture of the tender olive and the deep-growing vine we should find song and dance for every detail. At the camp fire we should hear songs of the march, the hunt, and the tribal wars. The Bible offers a picture of the rich and varied soil from which its literary products sprang.

Here, as elsewhere, a kinship exists between the

Hebrews and other peoples. We find similar customs and lore both among primitive peoples of ancient times and among tribes to-day in the same stage of development. Very similar songs and stories are to be heard to-day among Arab and Bedouin peoples. The songs of the Negroes are instinct with the same spirit, the same movement and rhythm, and the same general tone which characterized them centuries ago. One can still hear and see the Indian songs and dances among the Pueblo cities of the Southwest given much as they have been repeated from time immemorial, and the same is true of the monotonous repetitions of the howling dervishes. A great deal of our knowledge of primitive peoples has come from a study of this contemporary lore.

Among the most primitive peoples poetry, music, and the dance were indistinguishably united. The earliest form of spontaneous literature is a combination of verse, music, and imitative gesture. Rhythm, music, and simple syllables are the trilogy by which primitive man expressed his feelings of joy or sorrow, of victory or defeat. Dancing was a movement of the body intending to interpret the words the singer used. Some of the songs were without words or at best but a repetition of syllables without meaning. Comparatively few Indian songs are supplied with music. One writer in summing up his researches on primitive music says, "The most striking feature of all the savage songs is the frequent occurrence of words with no meaning whatever."[1] To this day nomadic tribes on the march repeat endlessly a rhythmic succession of syllables with no thought of their common meaning; indeed, they usually have no meaning. This explains the transmission of songs, with no ideas attaching to the words, from one tribe to another.

The first characteristic of folk-lore is the fact that it is a communal affair, an expression of the group. The entire social unit is swayed by the same feelings and moved by the same interests and motives. "It is a poetry," says Gaston Paris, "which every one believed and which every one could have made." In fact the folk music just grew and none could tell who the author was. A leader would sing a snatch of song and then the group would repeatedly sing it after him. From time to time new words would be added or the former ones changed. Perhaps the song would be in praise of some hero's adventure in war or in the chase. Different men would tell the same story as they severally pleased, each one reciting it in a low monotonous chant accompanied by improvised dancing. If a musical instrument were available, it would be brought into play, the same note being struck at recurring intervals. Most of these extempore songs would be forgotten, but now and then one would strike the popular fancy and would be repeated on other occasions until it became a part of the lore of the people. Later two or more songs might be put together and the new creation reach the dignity of a *lay*. Most peoples have had a class of singers corresponding to the *scops* of England, fitly named "shapers of song." In this manner the tribe might celebrate a discovery or invention. The "Song of the Sword" by Lamech may celebrate the discovery by his tribe of cutting instruments used in war or in the hunt. The "Fire Song" of India goes back to the earliest discovery of fire and expresses joy over this Promethean achievement.

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[1] Wallaschek, quoted from Finck, *Songs and Song Writers*, p. 4.

Another characteristic of folk poetry is rhythm. Rhythm is one of the universal facts of life. It is found in the succession of the seasons, in the alternation of night and day, and in the ebb and flow of the tide. Man is a rhythmic creature. He hears the clock with a lighter "tick" and a heavier "tock"; he keeps time in rowing a boat, in swinging a scythe, or in treading the wine press. The Arab woman lightens her load of heavy water jars by her body movements and songs. This universal rhythmic tendency crops out in Hebrew literature in its balance of thought and parallelism and phrase; in the alternation of feelings such as joy and sorrow, struggle and peace, lightheartedness and gravity. As the Bedouin marches across the desert to song and rhythm, so he also treads the longer journey of life.

Another important characteristic of folk-songs is the fact that they are objective rather than subjective in character. They are neither didactic nor moralizing. The poems are full of sentiment but they do not drift into sentimentality. There is keen observation of life and a perfectly natural and wholesome way of looking at things. Life is recorded as seen; feelings are frankly expressed but are not analyzed. The aim is not to teach or edify nor even consciously to entertain. Primitive man danced and sang because it was as natural for him to do so as it was for the birds to chirp. The naïveté and naturalness of this poetry is in delightful contrast to the conscious moralizing of more recent times.

Before the advent of writing, folk-songs served to aid the memory. By this means the chronology of the tribe was kept, the stages of the march recounted, and the adventures of the hero recalled. We all know how easy it is to memorize something in rhyme, especially when there is a great deal of repetition. Our Mother Goose rhymes are full of repetition similar to the parallel lines in Hebrew poetry. Children easily memorize such Mother Goose jingles as "Titty Mouse, Tatty Mouse," and the recurring words give off a pleasing effect. The Negro spirituals such as "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" and "Walking All Over God's Heaven" are other instances of this pleasing repetition which aids the memory.

An interesting example of a memory song, giving the stages of the march in the wilderness wanderings, is found in Numbers 21:14, 15. Here we have the music of the march, "a music conspicuous and charming in the poetry of the nomad Arabs":[2]

Wahab in Suphah (we swept)
And the valleys of Arnon
And the cliff of the valleys,
Which stretch to the seats of Ar
And lean on the shoulders of Moab.

This song is taken from a lost book, *The Wars of Yahweh,* and is perhaps a bit of a longer poem which recited in detail the stages of the journey. This form made them easy to remember, just as doggerel verse helped us to learn the capitals of the states or the kings of England. The same tendency toward repetition of familiar and pleasing sounds as an aid to memory is seen in the use of the refrain. The Hebrews were especially fond of the refrain and employed it with telling effect, as for example in Deborah's Song in Judges 5:2 and 5:9. Its use is particularly effective in Psalm 136.

One of the great poetic aids to memory is found in the picture power of words. Folk-songs have been called the "poetry of the unlettered," because originally they were not written but passed from lip to lip. The early Hebrew poetry is full of vivid figures of speech; they recur again and again with bold suggestiveness. One feels the pulsation of this vitality in Deborah's description of the cloudburst, the rapidly rising river, the chariots stuck in the mud, the stamping of the horses' hoofs, and the flight of Sisera and the captain. The same song makes use of a poetic device closely related to figurative language and very congenial to the primitive mind—onomatopœia—or the echoing of the meaning of words by their sounds:

Then thudded the hoofs of the horses;
Off gallopped, off gallopped his chargers.

A still more effective use of the sound of words to echo their meaning is Isaiah's description of the ignominious flight of the Assyrian army, where with long vowels the prophet renders the slow lift and roll of the billows while representing the distant booming and crashing of the army by the doubled Hebrew consonants:

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[2] George Adam Smith, *Early Poetry of Israel,* p. 62. His translation, somewhat modified, is given here.

Woe, the booming of peoples multitudinous!
As the booming of seas they are booming;
And the crash of nations immense,
As the crash of waters are crashing;
Nations—as the crash of great waters are crashing,
But he chides it, it fleeth afar,
Chased as chaff of the hills by the wind,
As dust rings in front of the storm.[8]

To us the forceful effect of the description is largely due to the pictures which the words convey, but for the people who heard the prophet it must have been the suggestiveness of the sounds. The English reader will naturally think of such examples as Lowell's "Appledore" with its "grinding, blinding, deafening ire," and of "How the Water Came Down at Lodore."

As a final characteristic of folk-lore may be mentioned the presence therein of humor and even, at times, of wit. While humor is fun for its own sake, wit is more conscious and purposeful. The essential element in both is the contrast involved in the incongruous. We do not find much conscious satire though we must not forget the pointed irony of Jotham's fable nor Elijah's sarcastic suggestion that the prophets of Baal call on their god more urgently. The contrast in size between David and Goliath constitutes an element of humor. In the story of Delilah's manipulation of Samson every man may see a reflection of his own domestic fortunes. The whole cycle of stories of "Samson the Sunny" is full of tricks played against the

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[8] Isaiah 17:12, 13. Translation by George Adam Smith. See his *The Early Poetry of Israel,* p. 7, for a transliteration of the Hebrew giving the full sound effects.

Philistines—tricks crude enough to us but quite humorous to the circles in which they arose. With what delight they must have sung the rhyming riddle with its play on the words,

With the jawbone of an ass
Have I massed a mass;
With the jawbone of an ass
Have I slain a thousand.[4]

To this same class belongs the rough tale of the priest Micah in Judges 17 and 18. We can imagine the crowd roaring with laughter as some one told the story of how Gideon taught the men of Succoth with thorns and briars (Judges 8:4-17), an incident which Tennyson saw fit to apply to Napoleon. The prophet Micah uses several good puns in the little poem in Micah 1:10-16. Perhaps his Hebrew audience quietly smiled as an unknown prophet first told the story of Jonah and the whale. The original hearers may have had a saving sense of humor which some later commentators lacked.

Finally we may inquire whether the folk-songs of the Hebrews were the forerunners of their later poetry. An illustration from Europe may aid in answering the question and pointing out its significance. Some historians of European music claim that there was a period in European history, namely that of the troubadours and minnesingers, which they designate as a period of folk-song. These writers hold that the folk-songs originated among the troubadours and minnesingers and passed from them to the meistersingers. The troubadours—even though the name means "to find or invent"—were not creative musical geniuses but rather adapters of old familiar songs, while the meistersingers did not use the folk-songs but derived their tunes from the chants of the church, which had distrusted the folk-songs and clung to the old Gregorian and Ambrosian chants. It was these which the meistersingers adapted to their needs. Wagner illustrates and satirizes this view of the meistersingers in the act of making them express contempt for the beautiful melody of Walther, who, in answer to the question as to who was his teacher, said that he had learned from the songs of the birds and other sounds of nature. With shrewd wisdom and insight Luther adapted the most popular folk-songs to the service of the church, so that the people could give vent to their religious feelings in language and tunes which they understood. The enemies of Luther insisted that one of the causes of the success of the Reformation was the widespread singing of these hymns set to popular folk-tunes. It may easily be that the Hebrew poetic literature, like Luther's church music, was built upon earlier Hebrew folk-songs. The twenty-third Psalm was sung in the days of the Second Temple, but its imagery, which goes back to the folk-songs, is one of the secrets of its charm.

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[4] Judges 15:16. Translation by A. R. Gordon, *Poets of the Old Testament*, p. 37.

2. Hebrew Folk-Songs

Folk-songs are of three kinds: the ballad, a short narrative or heroic poem; the epic, embodying a series of narratives treated in a grand and heroic manner; and the lyric, which is the song pure and simple. Hebrew songs are largely of the ballad and lyric type. Some have called Deborah's Song a ballad, others class it as a ballad epic. Although there is a great deal of epic quality in some of the poems, there is no really true epic in the Old Testament.

For convenience we shall divide these songs into two groups: "Patriotic Songs" and "Vineyard and Harvest Songs." From the complete list of patriotic songs given below we shall select for discussion those which will best serve our purpose.

Patriotic Songs [5]

1. The Song of the Sword, Genesis 4:23-24
2. Noah's Curse and Blessing, Genesis 9:25, 27
3. Isaac's Blessing on Jacob, Genesis 27:27-29
4. The Nation's Birth-song, Genesis 25:23
5. Isaac's Blessing on Esau, Genesis 27:39-40
6. Jacob's Prophecy for His Sons, Genesis 49:2-27
7. The Song of Moses and Miriam, Exodus 15:1-18
8. The Ark Song, Numbers 10:35-36
9. The Song of the Valley, Numbers 21:14-15
10. The Song of the Well, Numbers 21:17-18
11. Satire on Heshbon, Numbers 21:27-30
12. The Oracles of Balaam, Numbers 23:7-24:24
13. Joshua's Song at Gibeon, Joshua 10:12-14
14. Jotham's Fable, Judges 9:8-15
15. The Song of Deborah, Judges 5
16. Samson's Songs, Judges 14:14-18; 15:16
17. The Women's Song for David, I Samuel 18:7; 21:11

The Song of the Sword, Genesis 4:23-24

Most likely the prophetic writer J [6] took the first four lines of this poem from a collection of Kenite folk-songs and inserted them in Genesis 4, in the account of the genealogy of Lamech, adding the last two lines to illustrate and enforce the truth of Genesis 4:15. The genealogical descent from Cain was through Enoch, Irad, Mehujael, Methushael, and Lamech, the fierce hunter who sang this song. Lamech in committing murder harks back to his ancestor Cain, the first of the murderers.

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[5] Numbers 21:4 states that the "Song of the Valley" was taken from the "Book of the Wars of Yahweh," and Joshua 10:13 ascribes Joshua's Song to the "Book of Jashar."

The Satire on Heshbon is ambiguous, especially the second couplet, which does not make clear whether the invasion started from Heshbon and was therefore Sihon's, or whether the attacking army went against Heshbon and was therefore Israel's. Some have taken the song to be not of Hebrew but of Amorite origin, celebrating not the victory of Moses over Sihon but the previous victory of Sihon over Moab. See G. A. Smith, *The Early Poetry of Israel,* pp. 64-67, for discussion and translation.

[6] J is the symbol for the primitive document known as the *Yahwistic.* It consists of a series of scattered chapters, paragraphs and sentences in the first seven books of the Bible and perhaps also the books of Samuel. It has a lively style, is very human and picturesque, and is much earlier than the *Priestly* document known as P.

The song also contains some Kenite (Cain) tradition connected with the discovery of metals. The name Cain means "smith," a worker in metals. Lamech had two wives: Adah, who bare him Jabal, the ancestor of the nomads or pasture seekers, and Jubal, the father of the musicians; and the second wife, Zillah, the mother of Tubal-Cain, the maker of brass and iron cutting instruments. These three in Hebrew tradition correspond to Mercury, Apollo, and Vulcan respectively in Greek tradition. Lamech was then the father of the favored tribe who made the first swords—a proud achievement celebrated in this song reeking with blood and vengeance.

It is customary for the Arabs to sing of their victories before assemblages of their women; at times their women folk were spectators even of the tribal battles. The expression "wives of Lamech" probably refers to all the women of the tribe; the particular mention of Adah and Zillah would indicate that their particular husband, Lamech, is doing the singing. The song is early and pictures feud conditions before the time when vengeance was restricted (Genesis 9:6):

Who sheds the blood of man
By man his blood be shed.

There are cases on record of Arab chiefs who have slain as many as a hundred men in revenge for one. George Adam Smith[7] cites the famous war of el-Basus which broke out on the murder of one Kuliab for the slaughter of a camel, which had trespassed on the pasture of his clan. After much fighting between the tribes involved Muhalil, the brother of Kuliab, met Bujair, the son of el-Harith, the chief of the other side, who had, however, refrained from taking part in the feud. When

[7] G. A. Smith, *The Early Poetry of Israel,* p. 45.

Muhalil discovered who Bujair was he slew him, saying "Pay for Kuliab's shoe-latchet." The father, el-Harith, desiring to put a stop to the war, refused to take vengeance for his son's death. But Muhalil repeated his proud boast, "I have taken satisfaction only for a shoe-latchet!" so el-Harith broke out in a song of vengeance,

> Bujair was nought as a price for a slain man?
> A lord for a latchet, the price is too dear!

and the feud went on afresh.

The musical quality of Lamech's song and its adaptation to the uses of the dance appear in its stresses and rhyme. In the Hebrew the first four lines end in the vowel i (e), the rhyme between the second and fourth lines being perfect. The first couplet has four stresses to the line, the second couplet three and two (the Kinah form) and the last two lines three stresses each. The last two lines do not rhyme.

> Adah and Zillah, hear ye my voice;
> Wives of Lamech, give ear to my speech,
> For a man I slew for a wound to me,
> And a youth for a blow to me.
> For seven-fold avenged is Cain,
> But Lamech seventy and seven! [8]

SONGS OF THE WILDERNESS

The Song of Moses and Miriam, Exodus 15:1, 3, 5, 8-10, 20
The Ark Song, Numbers 10:35-36
The Song of the Valley, Numbers 21:14-15
The Song of the Well, Numbers 21:17-18

The Song of Moses and Miriam, found in the book of Exodus immediately after the narrative of the crossing of the Red Sea, celebrates the help received from Yahweh in outwitting and escaping the Egyptian troops. Miriam, timbrel in hand, led the group of singing and dancing women in the refrain:

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[8] Clough's poem, "The Song of Lamech," pictures the chief as being in a repentant state of mind, thinking that he may find refuge from revenge. This is certainly not the thought of the biblical poem.

Sing ye to Yahweh
For in triumph he rose;
Horse and chariot
He cast to the sea.[9]

It is possible that these lines, which occur in verse 1 and are repeated in verse 21, are all that remains of the original song. Other portions of the song as we have it contain phrases used elsewhere only in later literature. They are didactic in tone and out of harmony with the time and occasion. Verses 3, 5, and 8-10, however, because of their short measure and their immediate application to the crossing of the sea, have been thought to be early fragments. The lines are arranged in parallel couplets with two and occasionally three accents to the couplet.

George Adam Smith[10] describes a journey with a Bedawi tribe which entertained its guests with what the Arabs call a "fantasia." Seven of the men supplied with timbrels started a song and struck up a slow dance to the accompaniment of the music. In a little while it fell to the lot of the chief's son, because he was the more important personage to stand forth and improvise verses descriptive of the journey. The others caught up the verses and sang them back to him. Frequently an especially good verse was turned into a refrain which was repeated with the succeeding verses. Some such scene may have taken place after the crossing of the Red Sea. Perhaps improvised male and female choruses sang back and forth antiphonally. The stirring qualities of songs like the above can readily be felt and the joy thus occasioned easily imagined.

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[9] Translation by H. T. Fowler, *A History of the Literature of Ancient Israel,* p. 12.

[10] G. A. Smith, *The Early Poetry of Israel,* pp. 50-54.

The Song of the Ark contains the earliest suggestion of ritual. As the Ark was carried into battle the Israelites sang:

Arise, Yahweh!
　　And let thine enemies be scattered;
　　Let all that hate thee flee! (verse 35.)

After the victory had been won they returned the Ark to its accustomed place, singing:

Rest, thou Yahweh!
　　And bless the myriads
　　Of the tribes of Israel. (verse 36.)[11]

The Song of the Well is a charming little poem celebrating the opening of a new well or the finding of an old one. The high value set by desert tribes upon a well of good drinking water is illustrated in the covenant between Abraham and Abimelech at Beersheba, where certain water rights were in dispute. The Hebrew root meaning well is *Be'er* and is found in such geographical names as Beer, Beeroth, Beersheba, and Beer-Lahai-Roi. These wells were dug out of the gravel pits in the stream. During the winter rains they filled up with gravel, so that they had to be freshly opened up each spring. After such digging or opening was done the sheik of the tribe struck the well with his staff and it was thereafter known by his name, as, for example, Jacob's well in Samaria. In the light of this custom we can see why Moses struck the rock instead of speaking to it. Although Dalman[12] compares this poem with the well-songs which Arab women still sing as they draw the water in their buckets, we prefer looking upon it as a festal song celebrating the opening of the well. Nomadic Arabs dance around a new-found well and sing songs to it as though it were a living being:

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[11] A. R. Gordon, *Poets of the Old Testament*, p. 48.

[12] G. Dalman, *Palastinischer Diwan*, pp. 45 ff.

Spring up, well;
    Sing in response to it—
Well that the princes digged,
    That the rulers of the people delved,
With their sceptres and their staves.[13]

Some writers translate the stanza in four-line verse which brings out the rhythm more perfectly:

Spring up, O well! Sing to it!
Well that the princes dug,
That the nobles of the people delved,
With sceptres and with their staffs.[14]

Weir quotes the following Arab song, which is almost identical in tone with the one in our text:

Spring up, O well,
Flow copiously,
Drink and disdain not,
With a staff have we dug it.[15]

Joshua's Song at Gibeon, Joshua 10:12-14

The imagination of the Hebrew people was nurtured in the out-of-doors, for they spent their lives in the heat of the sun by day and in the open under the stars at night. Thus there developed a sort of lively intimacy with nature which led them to address her in figure and apostrophe. Joshua thus addressed this little song to the sun, as he realized that it would take more than a day to do all that in his battle rage he wished to do to the Amorites. The people of Gibeon, the reader will remember, had called on Joshua to help fight the Amorite kings of southern Canaan. He had come up from Gilgal by night, taken the

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[13] A. R. Gordon, *Poets of the Old Testament,* p. 26. Gordon follows Budde in translating verse 19, "From the wilderness to Mattanah," as an extra line to the song, "From the desert a gift." This is a suitable close and completes the needed parallel to the fifth line. See Gordon, *ibid.,* p. 26, note 2.

[14] Translation by H. T. Fowler, *A History of the Literature of Ancient Israel,* p. 14.

[15] T. H. Weir, *Expositor,* July, 1910, p. 81.

Amorites by surprise, and pursued them over the ranges to the western slope of Beth-horon. Then Joshua, standing before the people, said:

O Sun, on Gibeon be thou still,
And moon on the vale of Ajalon.
The sun is still and the moon is standing
Till the folk have lust on their foes.[16]

This translation puts the verbs in the present tense, and properly so. Joshua speaks as if the thing desired were already taking place. The position ascribed to the sun and moon would indicate an early morning hour, but this need not be taken literally; it is simply an example of synonymous parallelism. The poem is an almost perfect illustration of the attitude of intimacy between the primitive mind and nature, yet the prose editor who compiled the book of Joshua centuries later took pains to explain that the day was as long as two ordinary days!

The Song of Deborah, Judges 5

The Song of Deborah is the earliest piece of literature of any length in the Bible. It comes from the period when the Hebrew tribes were still scattered loosely on both sides of the Jordan and tribal divisions and jealousies were still dominant. Deborah appeals to the tribes generally on the ground of their common loyalty to Yahweh, who has descended from his abode on Sinai to fight for them and has summoned the powers of nature to their aid. Curses are pronounced upon the disloyal and praises heaped upon the loyal.

The prose account in chapter 4, which is a later addition, differs in some details from the poem in chapter 5.[17]

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[16] G. A. Smith, *The Early Poetry of Israel*, p. 79. His translation, slightly modified, is given here.

[17] In chapter 4 Jabin is described as "King of Canaan," reigning at Hazor, and Sisera is his general. Chapter 5 mentions a combination of kings with Sisera at their head. This may mean that several petty kings united against Israel and that the parts played by Jabin and Sisera are confused.

We here study only the poetic account. The battle occurred in the eleventh century B.C., the date at which the tribes were settling in Canaan. The times were as barbaric as the early days of the Scottish clans. The poem is a dithyrambic ode possessing striking poetic qualities of rhythm and vigor, picturesqueness and vividness of style, and a passionate patriotism.

Scholars have called attention to the significance of the names. Barak means "lightning" and we meet it in the Mediterranean world again as the name of the father of Hamilcar, the Carthaginian; it may thus be a nickname as Maccabæus, meaning "the hammerer," was a nickname for Judas the son of Mattathias. Likewise the name of Deborah, whom G. A. Smith calls the "queen-bee of the hive of Israel," means "a bee." The bee was associated in Greek thought with the soothsayers who hum or murmur hoarsely. The Delphian prophetess was known as the "humming priestess." In the present instance the nicknames have no important bearing upon the interpretation of the poem.

THE SONG OF DEBORAH [18]

The theme—a refrain

That leaders took lead in Israel
That the people were willing,
Bless ye, Yahweh.

Historical prelude of praise—chorus

Hearken, ye kings; rulers give ear;
I, even I, will sing to Yahweh,
Will sing praise to Yahweh, God of Israel.
Yahweh, in thy start from Seir,
On thy march from the field of Edom,

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[18] Translation from Laura Wild, *A Literary Guide to the Bible*, p. 44; adapted from Burney, *Judges*, and G. A. Smith, *The Early Poetry of Israel*. Various authors suggest musical arrangements; the present one is from Wild. To bring out the rhythm names should be accented on the last syllable, as Yahwéh, Barák, Deboráh, Kishón, etc.

The earth quaked, yea, the heaven rocked,
Yea, the clouds dropped water.
The mountains shook before Yahweh,
Before Yahweh, the God of Israel.

Israel's sad estate—a recitative

From the days of Shamgar ben-Anath,
From the days of old caravans ceased,
And they that went along the ways
Now walk by crooked paths.
Villages ceased in Israel,
And hushed was the work of country folk,
No shield was seen, or spear,
'Mong the forty thousand in Israel—
Till thou didst arise, Deborah,
Didst arise as a mother in Israel.

A wild war chant—chorus

Awake, awake, Deborah!
Awake, strike up a song!
Up with thee, Barak! put on thy strength,
Capture thy captors, thou son of Abinoam.

A refrain of gratitude

My heart is to Israel's leaders,
The people's willing ones
        Bless ye, Yahweh—

Tell of it ye riders of white she-asses [19]
And ye that walk by the way.
Hark to the maidens laughing at the wells!
There they recount the righteous acts of Yahweh,
The righteous acts of his arm in Israel.

The muster of the clans

Then down to the gates gat the nobles;
Yahweh's folk gat them down mid the heroes.
From Ephraim they spread out on the vale;
"After thee, Benjamin!" mid thy clansmen,
From Machir came down the commanders,

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[19] Rulers rode on white asses, though sometimes their mounts were either "tawny" or "roan," which is a sort of light red or reddish gray.

And from Zebulon men wielding the truncheon.
Men of Issachar marched with Deborah,
And Napthali was leal to Barak:
To the vale he was loosed at his heel.

Utterly reft into factions was Reuben;
Great were his searchings of heart.
Why satest thou still mid the sheepfolds,
To list to the pipings for flocks?
Gilead stayed at home beyond Jordan,
And Dan sat still by the ships.
Asher remained by the shore of the seas,
Quietly dwelt by his creeks.
But Zebulon—he flung his soul to the death,
And Napthali on the heights of the field.

The battle and rout

On came the kings, they fought;
Then fought the kings of Canaan;
In Taanach, by the rills of Megiddo,[20]
No gain of money took they!
From heaven fought the stars;
From their courses they fought with Sisera.
The river Kishon swept them off;
It faced them, the torrent Kishon.
Bless thou, my soul, the might of Yahweh!

Then thudded the hoofs of the horses:
Off gallopped, off gallopped his chargers.
Curse ye, curse ye, Meroz!
Curse ye, curse ye her townsfolk,
For they came not to the help of Yahweh,
To the help of Yahweh mid the heroes.

The retribution

Most blessed of women be Jael!
Of tent-dwelling women most blessed!
Water he asked her and milk she gave,
Buttermilk brought in a lordly bowl.
She put her hand to the tent pin,
And her right hand to the workman's hammer;
And she hammered Sisera, she shattered his head,

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[20] The ancient pass and battlefield in the Plain of Esdraelon.

She smashed, she hacked through his temples.
'Twixt her feet he bowed, he fell down, he lay:
'Twixt her feet he bowed, he fell down.
Where he bowed there he fell dead!

The anxiety of Sisera's mother

Out through the window she leaned and exclaimed
The mother of Sisera out through the lattice:

"Wherefore delayeth his car to come?"
Her wisest princesses made answer,
Yea, she returns her words to herself:
"Are they not finding, dividing the spoil?
A damsel, two damsels for each man!
A spoil of dyed stuffs for Sisera,
A spoil of dyed stuffs embroidered:
Dyes, double brocade for the neck of the queen?"

Conclusion

So perish all thy foes, Yahweh:
But be thy friends like the sun going forth in
his strength.

Truly this poem is a wild and passionate war ballad. Deborah was a veritable Joan of Arc in the crucial struggle of her people against their enemies. Their pathetic condition under Sisera's oppression is revealed by suggestion in two picturesque strokes: the deserted highways and the vain search for weapons. The description of the battle is couched in short, incisive sentences dealing successively with the kings, the horses, the river, and the stars. The measure is in three and four beats, which is the most popular Hebrew meter.

There is an effective use of onomatopœia to represent the galloping of the horses. In verse 22 the sound of their hoofs is imitated by the repetition of the words, *daharú, daharú.* It is interesting to compare this with Browning's couplet in "How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix":

I sprang to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;
We gallopped, Dirck gallopped, we gallopped all three.

The effect is well brought out in the German translation of this passage:

Da stampfen die Hufe der Rosse:
Der Galopp, der Galopp der Renner!

Mark the use of hyperbole in the lines:

From heaven fought the stars;
From their courses they fought against Sisera.

A dramatic turn is given to the narrative—with an ideal personage represented as speaking—when Sisera's mother is conversing with her servants about her son's delay. Some writers understand that an ideal figure, Yahweh, is conceived as present in the earthquake, but this is doubtful.

A more effective use of iteration can hardly be conceived than the lines:

And she *hammered* Sisera, she *shattered* his head,
She *smashed,* she *hacked* through his temples.

Graphic particular terms such as these are stronger than more general terms like "kill." Such also is Mark Antony's use of the word "stabbed" instead of "murdered" in his oration over Cæsar's dead body.

Much ado has been made over the more horrible features of these stories, which some good folk would tone down a bit. In a revised version of "Little Red Riding Hood" the grandmother is not at home when the wolf arrives and so does not get eaten. After a little girl had read this more humane version her father remarked that in his day the wolf went in and ate the grandmother in one big bite. "O, that's much better," exclaimed the little girl. The brutality in these stories which grates upon older people does not affect children in the same way. When Jack the Giant Killer rips open the stomach of the giant, or Jack Daredevil cuts off the heads of a dozen sailors, or Bloody Mike makes a handful of Indians "bite the dust" it is accepted by the children as a part of the story and raises no moral issue at all. To drag in moral distinctions in such cases is to miss the whole point of the story and bring in unreal issues.

An interesting little detail about this deed, however, is worth noting. Heber, the Kenite, the husband of Jael who killed Sisera, seems to have been a traitor. The Kenites had joined the Israelites in the wilderness and had received a portion of the land as their inheritance. Heber apparently had separated himself from his people and pitched his tent close to the muster ground of Barak (Judges 4:11) in order to spy on the Hebrew leader's movements. But his wife evidently was not a willing party to this treason against the Israelites, and when the Canaanite Sisera came to her tent she paid him in the same coin as her husband had dealt out to their real friends. The one act of treachery is matched by a still darker one.

VINEYARD AND HARVEST SONGS

Among Hebrew songs of labor those relating to the culture of the vine fill the largest place. It was the custom of the country folk to sing and dance in the vineyards. In Isaiah 16:10 the stern shout of battle breaks in without warning upon the joyous singing in the vineyards, so that "no treader shall tread out the winepresses: I have made the vintage shout to cease." In Jeremiah 25:30 it is said that "Yahweh will give a shout as they that tread out the grapes." It is probable that Isaiah 65:8 preserves a fragment of one of these old vintage songs:

Destroy it not
For a blessing is in it.[21]

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[21] A. R. Gordon, *Poets of the Old Testament,* p. 25.

This may have been associated with the finding of the new wine in the cluster. In some of the messianic prophecies the joy of the reborn nation is compared to the "joy of the harvest," and other symbols of vineyard plenty.[22] In the Song of Deborah there are "flutings of the flocks" and the songs of the shepherds. The songs of the field and vineyard furnished tunes for some of the Psalms, notably "Gittith," to which Psalms 8, 81, and 84 were set. Although not many labor songs have crept into the Bible they must have played a large part in the life of the people.

The Corn Song, Hosea 8:7

This is one of the most remarkable four-line stanzas in the Bible. It has perfect rhythm and a beautiful rhyme which Duhm's translation conveys very well. Whosoever will compare the prose translation of this passage in either of the standard Bible versions with the rendering here given will begin to appreciate what modern scholarship has done toward preserving the beauty and local color of biblical poetry. Hosea quotes it as if it were familiar to his hearers:

A cornstalk all yellow
Brings no meal to a fellow:
But if the grains should bend it,
The wild ox would end it.[23]

Isaiah's Parable of the Vineyard, Isaiah 5
The Lord's Delightful Vineyard, Isaiah 27:2-6

The first song is that of an unfruitful vineyard which Yahweh cultivated without results and hence he must consign it to destruction. The briars and thorns are the sins of the people. The short lines and the light tripping meter give place in the last stanza to the longer and more solemn lines as the prophet makes his application:

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[22] For example, I Enoch 10:17 ff., II Baruch 29:5-8.
[23] English translation of Duhm's, *The Twelve Prophets*, p. 99.

Let me sing, I pray, of my friend,
A song of his love for his vineyard.

A vineyard belonged to my friend,
On a hillside exceedingly fertile.
He digged it and cleared it of stones,
And planted the choicest of vines.
A tower he built in its midst,
And also a wine-vat he hewed.
And he waited for grapes that are good,
But alas! it bore grapes that are wild.

O, ye in Jerusalem dwelling,
And ye who inhabit Judea,
Now judge, I sincerely entreat you,
O judge between me and my vineyard.
What more could I do for my vineyard
Than that which already I'd done?
Why then, when I looked for good grapes,
Did it bear only grapes that are wild?

Now let me make known unto you
What I purpose to do to my vineyard.
I will tear down its hedge of green briars,
And it shall be wholly destroyed.
Its wall of piled stones I'll o'erthrow,
And it shall be trodden in dust.
I will make it a desolate waste,
Neither pruned nor plowed shall it be.
But thorns shall spring up and sharp briars,
And the clouds will I stay lest they rain.

For the vineyard of Yahweh of Hosts is the House of Israel
And the men of Judah his cherished plantation.
And he looked for *equity*, but behold! *iniquity*,
And for *right*, but behold! *a riot*.[24]

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[24] Translation by my colleague, Professor M. H. Dunsmore. He is indebted to Professor William Hopper, of the University of California, for the translation of the last two lines conveying in English the play on words (see italicized words).

In Isaiah's second vineyard song Israel is again compared to a vineyard and Yahweh is the keeper, but the enemies now are the foreign nations. Yahweh is not angry with Israel but is eager to protect them from the oppressor. The situation implied and the style of the poem are later than Isaiah, and indicate that it was probably written during the Persian period:

A vineyard delightful—
Sing ye to it.

I Yahweh, am its keeper:
I water it moment by moment:
Lest its leaves be missing,
By day and by night I keep it.

I cherish no anger against it:
But had I the briars and thorns,
I would trample them down in the fray,
I would burn them up altogether.

Rise, then, let them seek my protection,
And let them make peace with Me;
Yea, let them make peace with Me.

That day shall Jacob take root,
Israel shall blossom and bud,
And with fruit fill the face of the world.[25]

The Farmer's Plough Song, Isaiah 28:23-29

This may originally have been a folk-song. The prophet uses it to teach that God, too, like the farmer, has a method of work of his own:

Listen, and hear ye my voice,
Give heed, and hear ye my word;
Doth the plowman keep ploughing forever,
Keep opening and harrowing the ground?
Does he not after leveling the surface,
Scatter fennel and sow cummin? [26]

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[25] Translation from Cheyne and McFadyen.

[26] Cummin and fennel are small seeds used for condiments. The cummin is small and easily separated from the case.

And plant there wheat and barley,
And spelt as a border?
For Yahweh hath taught him the right way;
And his God it is that hath taught him.

Men thresh not fennel with sledges,
Nor is a cart-wheel rolled over with cummin,
But fennel is threshed with a staff,
And cummin with a flail.
Do they crush the bread-corn to pieces?
Nay, we do not keep threshing forever,
But after the wheel has rolled over it,
We spread it but do not crush it.
From Yahweh of Hosts doth this also proceed
Wonderful counsel, great wisdom hath He.[27]

Joel 2:21-23 is an example of a spring song that may have been a folk-song:

Fear not, O earth, be joyful and glad,
For Yahweh is doing great things.
Fear not, ye beasts of the field;
For the pastures of the wilderness are sprouting;
For the trees are giving their fruit,
Both the fig tree and the vine are yielding their strength.
So ye children of Zion, be joyful and glad
In Yahweh your God:
For to you He hath given the rain for righteousness.

For Study and Comparison

The student interested in folk-songs will find a wealth of material for comparison, since peoples are more like one another in primitive societies than are those in more advanced civilizations. Negro spirituals, for instance, offer an inviting field. Early English ballads are full of songs of war, the hunt and adventure. The following is a typical minstrel effort of the time of Henry VIII:

The hunt is up, the hunt is up,
And it is well nigh day,
Harry our king has gone hunting,
To bring his deer to bay.

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[27] Translation from Kent and Wild.

Gummere's *Old English Ballads* contains many of the better English war songs, such as "Battle of Harlow," "Flodden Field," as well as songs of love and adventure.

An old slave song of Egypt, one such as even the Israelites may have sung, is still in use to-day:

They starve us, they starve us;
They beat us, they beat us;
But there's some one above,
But there's some one above,
Who will punish them well,
Who will punish them well.

The following is a beautiful labor song preserved in Jewish tradition:

Great God, to Thee we sing our songs,
Thou art our only aid,
Let us gather all the sheaves,
'Til again the day doth fade.

Great God, you help the people,
As they call in time of need,
With Thy wheat O bless us now,
For Thy love we do now plead.[28]

The following little pastoral is by Bacchilides:

To Zephyr, kindest wind that swells the grain,
Eudemus consecrates this humble fane;
For that he listened to his vows and bore
On his soft wings the rich autumnal store.[29]

Virgil's *Second Georgic* is set in the same key as Isaiah's farmer song:

Happy the man, who studying Nature's laws,
Through known effects can trace the secret cause—
His mind possessing in a quiet state,
Fearless of Fortune, and resigned to Fate.[30]

[28] "A Song of Bread," quoted from Hobbs and Miles, *Six Bible Plays*, p. 126.

[29] "For a Bounteous Harvest"; translation in *Century Readings in Classical Literature*, p. 53. See same for other Greek and Latin pastorals.

[30] Dryden's translation, *Oxford Book of Latin Verse*.

The story of *Lorna Doone* contains an interesting description of the harvest times. The parson, wearing his gown and cassock and with Bible in hand, assembles the reapers and works with them. When the day's work is done they meet for supper and lift up "a neck of corn dressed with ribbons gaily, and set it down upon the mantelpiece." They then sing the Exmoor Harvest Song:[81]

The wheat, oh the wheat, 'tis the ripening of the wheat!
All the day it has been hanging down its heavy head,
Bowing o'er our bosoms with a beard of red;
'Tis the harvest and the value makes the labor sweet.

Chorus

The wheat, oh the wheat, and the golden, golden wheat!
Here's to the wheat with the loaves upon the board!
We've been reaping all the day, and we never will be beat,
But fetch it all to mow-yard and then we'll thank the Lord.

3. RIDDLES AND PUNS

Riddle—me, riddle—me, riddle—me—ree,
Perhaps you can tell what this riddle may be!

The riddle has been a favorite form of amusement among all peoples, and the Hebrews were no exception. Once upon a time when men had less to do than they now have they often spent days in seeking the answer to a riddle, such as Samson's riddle of the lion and the honey. Greek mythology has immortalized the riddle of the Sphinx:

What goes on four feet, on two feet, and three,
But the more feet it goes on the weaker it be?

Œdipus rather than be eaten by the Sphinx worked until he solved it. When he replied, "Man, who in childhood creeps on hands and knees, in manhood walks erect, and in old age goes with the aid of a staff," it is said that the

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[81] Laura Wild, *Geographic Influences in Old Testament Masterpieces*, p. 143.

Sphinx was so mortified that she cast herself off the rock and was killed. Homer, so Plutarch tells us, was so chagrined over his failure to solve a riddle that he died.

Riddles, enigmas, conundrums and puns are very primitive kinds of humor. They are based on an obscure likeness between things otherwise utterly unlike. In the propounding of a riddle people are asked to probe for this none too plain likeness, and the fun comes both from their mortification over their failure and from their surprise when told. The Hebrews delighted in these likenesses and contrasts and worked their imaginations hard to discover them. The popular oracles of Greece also specialized in enigmas, which it took even more wit to interpret than to originate. The Babylonians and Egyptians had their wise men whose business it was to decipher enigmatic sayings and portents. The Hebrews were proud of the way in which Daniel and Joseph could compete successfully with these wise men.

Among the Hebrews Samson seems to have been fondest of a practical joke. He played a costly one on the Philistines when he set fire to their grain fields by tying jackals together and having them carry a blazing torch between them. On another occasion when he wanted to slay the Philistines and had no weapon he used the jawbone of an ass and then told the story in punning verse, indicative of the ridiculous plight of his enemies:

With the jawbone of an ass
Have I massed a mass,
With the jawbone of an ass
Have I slain a thousand.[32]

On his way to his wedding he took the time necessary to cross a hill to see what had become of a lion which he had slain on one of his courting trips. He found the bees in possession and enough honey so that he could take the comb out and carry some to his father and mother. When he came to his wedding feast he wagered "thirty fine linen wrappers and thirty festal garments" that his guests could not answer the riddle he would give them. It was this:

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[32] Judges 15:16. A. R. Gordon, *Poets of the Old Testament,* p. 37. The story of Samson is given in Judges, chaps. 14, 15, and 16.

> Out of the eater came something to eat,
> And out of the strong came something sweet.

It was hardly a fair riddle, because no one else had access to the "missing link," but Delilah finally wormed the secret from him and gave it out. Samson then made up a crude verse to fit the case:

> If with my heifer you did not plow
> You had not solved my riddle now.

The book of Proverbs is full of riddles giving nuggets of wisdom. We shall instance only one example:[38]

> What four things are never satisfied?
>
> Sheol; and the barren womb;
> The earth, that is not satisfied with water;
> And the fire that saith not, enough.

DISCUSSION TOPICS AND EXERCISES

1. Collect an anthology of folk-songs from various peoples, including Negroes and the American Indians.
2. Select some play songs of children which may originally have been labor songs, e.g., "Patty cake, patty cake, baker's man."
3. Define and illustrate the use of terms connected with early poets and poetry, as *scop, gleeman, minstrel, skald, trouver, troubadour, saga, epos, runes, ballad, eclogue, pastoral, bucolic, ode,* etc.
4. How did the term "foot" originate as a metrical term in poetry?
5. Why did the early priests put their lore into verse?
6. Trace the development of the epic up from the early hero songs.
7. Discuss Macaulay's dictum that poetry degenerates as civilization advances.

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[38] Proverbs 30:15, 16. Other examples will be found on page 255.

BOOKS TO CONSULT

On the General Topic

ALDEN, R. M., *An Introduction to Poetry,* Chap. 2.
BETT, HENRY, *Nursery Rhymes and Tales,* Chap. 1.
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FISKE, JOHN, *Myths and Myth Makers,* Chap. 1.
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HOUGHTON, LOUISE S., *Hebrew Life and Thought,* Chap. 2.
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On Biblical Folk-lore and Songs

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Commentaries

DRIVER, S. R., "Genesis," Westminster.
BENNETT, W. H., "Genesis," The New Century.
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DRIVER, S. R., "Exodus," Cambridge Bible.

CHAPTER III

MYTHS AND LEGENDS

1. THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF MYTH

THE myth, which is one of the earliest forms of literature, was one of primitive man's most favored story mediums. Although folk-lore usually takes the forms of poetry and song, the prose stories of early man exhibit the same vivid imagination and the same human elements. The myth needs to be distinguished, on the one hand, from folk-lore songs having to do with war, the chase, or the adventures of a hero, and, on the other hand, from fables and other stories used to teach a truth or point a lesson.

Myths are the earliest attempts of men to answer the perennial questions of "how" and "why." Even in a primitive and naïve age folks were not content to live in ignorance but made many guesses at the nature of things. These stories represent their efforts to state and explain the facts of the universe, to unveil the mysteries of existence, and to express the meaning of life. As children ask questions which are the despair of their cultured twentieth-century parents, so in the childhood of the race questioning went on as to how the world came to be, who made man and how, what is death, and what follows after it. Primitive man did not think of clouds as bodies of vaporized water but rather as swan maidens flitting across the firmament; the moon was not a lifeless body of stones but the horned huntress Artemis coursing through the upper ether. Though the answers given were often crude enough they demonstrated the awakening of that intellectual curiosity which is the first condition of all mental progress. Into the myths went early man's most serious intellectual efforts and his most devout reaction to a mysterious world. They constitute one of the best available pictures of the working of his mind.

The myth was also a source of æsthetic enjoyment to primitive man. His rich and lively imagination did not try to distinguish, as we aim to do, between fact and supposition, between symbol and literal truth. With no abstract vocabulary he had to depend on picture words to convey his ideas. It was perfectly natural that he should think of the moon as Aphrodite, born of sea-foam in the east, or of the sun as the yellow-haired Phœbus driving westward all day in his flaming chariot. It may be that we have lost rather than gained as a result of our matter-of-fact way of squeezing all the imaginative touches out of our explanation of nature. In these stories primitive man commingled his love of truth and his love of beauty, his philosophy and his æsthetic appreciation. The myth removed him from the sordid world of immediate and selfish ends and lent color and romance to the world in which he lived.

Different classifications of myths have been proposed and various explanations of their origins have been advanced. It is not our purpose here to enter into an examination of either. Suffice it to say that the myths of most peoples have their roots in the desire for an explanation of things or in the love of beauty. One group of myths under the former head has to do with origins: the origin of the gods, as, for example, the Greek myths of Uranus, Kronos, and Zeus; the origin of the world and of man, as the various creation stories. A second group is occupied with natural phenomena. The myth of Persephone is an imaginative explanation of the recurring seasons of the year. The occurrence of an unusual natural event, such as a very hot spell, is attributed to the rashness of the inexperienced Phæton driving too near to the earth with his sun chariot. A third and very different group devotes its attention to the origin and significance of social and religious practices and institutions. The Promethean myth accounts for the origin of fire, the myth of Isis and Osiris puts a foundation under an elaborate ritual in use for the dead, and the historical siege of Troy is mirrored in the mythical rape of Helen. The element common to these myths is an effort at explanation, the form of which varies with the theme and the pictures current in the thought of the people.

The Hebrew people shared in this universal passion for the explanation of things. In the Bible we find some remnants of crude Semitic myths, such as the one referring to Yahweh's combat with Rahab the Leviathan (Isaiah 51:9; Job 26:12), and another to the union of the sons of God with the daughters of men (Genesis 6:1-4). Israel's maturer faith discarded these survivals of primitive mythology, but the creation stories were retained and became the vehicle of a later monotheistic view of the world. Their religious value lies in the dignity and worth of the concept of God which they present, but their human interest inheres in their explanation of familiar facts of observation and experience, such as why women suffer pain in childbirth, why serpents crawl in the dust, and why man must toil in order that he may eat. These stories also give a reason for the existing sacredness of the sabbath and for the all but universal custom of wearing clothing. The flood story accounts for the origin of the rainbow, and the Babel story (Genesis 11:1-9) for the diversity of languages among men.

Another whole series of stories in Genesis is engaged in explaining the origins and relationships of various peoples. Most, if not all, of these are mythical in character. A number of the tales of the patriarchs, such as the story of Dinah and Tamar in Genesis 34 and 38, embody tribal traditions. Another object of these myths is to explain the origin and meaning of proper names. The name Abraham is interpreted in Genesis 17:6 as meaning "the father of a multitude"; Jacob is the "heel-holder," because at birth he held his twin brother by the heel (Genesis 25:26); in Genesis 18:12 Isaac is said to have come by his name because his mother laughed at his birth. Beersheba, or "the well of the oath," in Genesis 21:31 is so-called because Abraham and Abimelech took an oath there, while Genesis 21:28-30 makes the assertion that the name means "the well of seven," because Abraham gave Abimelech seven lambs. Most of these stories arose subsequent to the event.

Still another and most interesting group of Hebrew stories aim to explain existing social and religious institutions. The Passover, it is explained, had its origin in a series of events preceding the departure from Egypt (Exodus 12:1-36; 13:1-16). The Jews do not eat the meat of a creature's thigh because it was at that point that the angel touched Jacob, and the peculiar limping of the maidens at the dances at Penuel was because Jacob lamed his hip in the same all night struggle (Genesis 32:30-31). The annual lamentation of the Gileadite women is traced to the rash vow of Jephthah which led to the sacrifice of his daughter (Judges 11:30-40). In one tale circumcision is traced to Abraham, in another to Moses.[1] Certain places were sacred to the Israelites because God had appeared to their ancestors at these spots. Such a place was Bethel, where Jacob had his vision; Hebron, where Abraham's guests appeared, and Ophrah, where the angel appeared to Gideon.

It is just as unfair to subject a myth to the tests applied to matters of fact as it would be to judge a poem by the canons of logic. Myth belongs entirely to the realm of imaginative ideas; it represents an effort to arrive at truth, not fact. Legends, on the other hand, have a basis of fact mingled with their romancing. Some one has put it thus, "Myth is the creation of a fact out of an idea; legend is the seeing of an idea in fact." George Bernard Shaw says, "The imposition of these legends as literal truths at once changes them from parables into falsehoods." He continues, "Every one of these legends is the common heritage of the human race, and there is only one inexorable condition attached to their healthy enjoyment, which is that no one shall take them literally. The reading of stories and taking a delight in them made Don Quixote a gentleman; the believing them literally made him a madman who slew lambs instead of feeding them." [2]

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[1] See Genesis 17:9-14.

Plato used the myth as a vehicle to convey the higher truths of reason. The myths of Plato are as distinctive in his teachings as are the parables in the discourses of Jesus. Wagner preferred the myth because of its universality, its freedom from conventions of time and place, and its embodiment of universal human types, fundamental traits of character, and elementary motives and emotions. In *Tannhauser*, *Lohengrin*, and *Parsifal* he made use of Christian mythology and symbolism, and in the *Ring* he pictured the central theme of the Norse mythology. The myth not only delighted primitive man but furnishes the poet and the philosopher with vehicles conveying truth and beauty.

> Man looks aloft and with erected eyes,
> Beholds his own hereditary skies.
> From such rude principles our form began,
> And earth was metamorphosed into man.
>
> —OVID.

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[2] G. B. Shaw, *Back to Methusaleh*, p. lviii.

2. MYTHS OF CREATION AND THE FALL OF MAN

The Older Creation and Temptation Story, Genesis 2:4b-3:24

The Priestly Creation Story, Genesis 1:1-2:4a

These two accounts of creation, the one early, the other comparatively late, are as different as two stories of the same event can well be. The first is from what is known as the J or *Jahvistic* document, so-called because Yahweh is the name used for God; the second account belongs to the P or *Priestly* source, which is of late composition and which uses Elohim as the name for God. Yahweh was the more personal and intimate name and the one connecting God with Israel's history. The term Elohim, the plural of *El,* a general Semitic term for God, represents the more cosmic and philosophic conception of the learned. Though the form is plural it does not connote plurality of gods but probably denotes a "plural of majesty," i.e., puts an emphasis upon the dignity and power of God.[3]

Each of these two stories of creation has a characteristic style of its own. The older account (Genesis 2:4*b*-3:24) has been called "one of the most charming idyls in literature." The writer shows that he possessed striking ability to paint a vivid picture, to delineate life and character graphically, to enter sympathetically into the story and to give it those touches of pathos and delicacy which invest it with such charm. It is permeated with a childlike simplicity and a wonderful depth of moral and religious feeling. The later story, which is more formal, has been called "an epic of creation." Its imagery, its balance of thought and structure, its carefully worked out form, and its repetition of phrases are the work of a later and more conscious art. In a word it is cast in fixed poetic molds.

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[3] The plural may be the survival of an earlier usage which has lost its plural idea.

Moulton in particular has called attention to its symmetry and frequent repetition of phrase.[4] The description of the six days of creation divides into two balanced sections of three days each. The first day is given to the creation of light and the fourth to the bodies which emit it. The second day witnesses the creation of waters and the fifth of life in the waters and in the firmament above the waters. On the third day the land is separated from the water and on the sixth day the creation of land animals including man is cited. To each of these days thus balanced a strophe is given with the following introductory and concluding forms:

And God said . . .
And it was so . . .
And God saw that it was good . . .[5]
And there was evening and morning . . . day.

The orderly progression to a climax through the six days is perfectly apparent. The seventh day was the sabbath of rest.

The earlier writer adds the temptation story to his account of creation. The primitive innocence of Adam and Eve, the subtleness of the serpent, the strong likelihood that they would make the choice which they did and the resulting consciousness of sin and shame reveal a remarkable insight into human nature. The serpent's suggestion that the reason God does not want them to eat of the tree is that then they shall be as gods, knowing good and evil, is akin to the jealousy of any infringement of his prerogatives which dominates Zeus in the Promethean myth.[6] The tree in the garden is a symbol of man's access to those experiences without which life would be insufferably dull and mechanical, but which carry with them possibilities of self-consciousness and shame. It constitutes a clear picture of the transition from childhood innocence to self-knowledge, which is something more significant than mere expulsion from the garden.[7] The story seeks to account for the origin of such basic things as sex distinctions, the accompaniment of pain at childbirth, the necessity of human toil, the habits of the serpent, and the wearing of clothes. According to the writer, Eve (Hebrew *Hawa*) is so named "because she is the mother of all living," but the derivation of the name is uncertain. The treatment of the sex question is very delicate when compared with that of other Oriental writers. The following quotations will give an idea of the style and beauty of the whole:

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[4] R. G. Moulton, *Literary Study of the Bible,* p. 68.

[5] This expression is omitted in the account of the second day. The mediæval rabbis explained this omission by saying that on the second day God created Sheol and the nether world.

[6] In Goethe's *Faust,* Mephistopheles, disguised as the Doctor, writes in the student's handbook, "Ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil."

Genesis 2:25

Then said the man,
This, now, is bone of my bone
And flesh of my flesh.
This one shall be called woman
For from man was she taken.[8]

Genesis 3:14ff.

Cursed shalt thou be above all animals,
And above all the beasts of the field.
On thy belly shalt thou go,
And dust shalt thou eat,
All the days of thy life.
Enmity will I set between thee and the woman
And between thy offspring and her offspring.
He shall bruise thee on the head,
And thou shalt wound him on the heel.

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[7] In a mosque in Constantinople the story of the expulsion from the garden is told in six languages. "Atham et Hawa, Hawa apfel mangee, Adam mangee; porta paradiso apertit, hedegit." A free translation is: "Adam and Eve, Eve ate an apple, Adam ate; the gates of paradise were opened; get out of here."

[8] Translation and arrangement from C. F. Kent, *Student's Old Testament,* Vol. I, p. 54. There is a play on *ish,* man, and *ishsha,* woman. Woman was called *ishsha* because she was taken from *ish.*

To the woman he said,
I will make thy pain great in thy pregnancy,
With pain shalt thou bring forth children.
Yet toward thy husband shall be thy desire,
And he shall rule over thee.

Cursed shall be the ground because of thee,
By painful toil shalt thou eat from it all the days of thy life.
Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth for thee,
And thou shalt eat the herb of the field.
By the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread,
Until thou return to the ground,
Because from it thou wast taken;
For dust thou art,
And to dust thou shalt return.

FOR STUDY AND COMPARISON

CREATION MYTHS OF OTHER RACES

Babylonian Creation Account, Barton, *Archæology of the Bible,* Part II, Chap. 2.[9]
Babylonian Creation Epic, Barton, *Ibid.,* Part II, Chap. 1.
Brahmanic Creation Myths, Hume, *Thirteen Principal Upanishads,* Introd., Chap. 3; Brihad-Aranyaka, 1, Secs. 1, 2, 4; Brihad-Aranyaka, 3, Sec. 8; Aiteryea, 1, Secs. 1-9; Chandoya, 1, Secs. 8, 9; Chandoya, 3, Sec. 19; Chandoya, 6, Sec. 2.
The Norse Prose Edda, Mallet, *Northern Antiquities,* Part I, pp. 1-15.
Ovid, *Metamorphoses,* "The Creation."
Frazer, Sir James G., *Folk Lore in the Old Testament,* Vol I, Chaps. 1, 2.

Scholars long ago drew attention to the close relationships between the Hebrew and the Babylonian civilizations. These peoples come from the same racial stock and the stories current among both are derived from a common heritage of Semitic mythology older than either. The root civilization common to the two had already matured when Abraham migrated westward. The earlier

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[9] See also Morris Jastrow, *Civilization of Babylonia and Assyria,* Chap. 8; Kent, *Student's Old Testament,* Vol. I, pp. 360-373. Barton's translations are given here.

Babylonian account of creation is briefer, more direct, and less formal than the Epic, and compares favorably with the earlier Genesis account. Only brief extracts can be given here:

A holy house, a house of the gods, in a holy place had not been made,
No reed had sprung up, no tree had been created,
No brick had been made, no foundation had been built,
No house had been constructed, no city had been built.

. . . .

Marduk bound a structure of reeds upon the face of the waters,
He formed dust, he poured it out beside the reed structure;
He caused the gods to dwell in the habitation of their heart's desire,
He formed mankind.
The goddess Araru with him created mankind,
Cattle of the field in whom is the breath of life he created.
He formed the Tigris and the Euphrates and set them in their places,
Their names he did well declare.
The grass, the marshgrass, the reed and the brushwood he created,
The wild cow and her young, the wild calf; the ewe and her young, the lamb of the fold;
Gardens and forests;
The wild-goat, the mountain goat, who cares for himself.

The later epic written on seven tablets shows the hand of the priests. It is more theological, formal and superstitious. Marduk struggles with Tiamat and slays her after a gigantic battle, then splits her body in two "like a flat fish into two halves," one of which becomes the earth, the other the firmament. Tablet VI gives the story of man's creation. The style and temper of the epic may be judged from the following lines but the student is advised to turn to Barton or Jastrow for the whole:

Tablet IV

O Marduk, thou art the preserver of our lives!
We give thee sovereignty over the totality of the world!
Sit thou in the assembly, thy word shall be exalted!
Thy weapon shall never be overcome, may it destroy thy foe.

Tablet V

He [Marduk] ordained the stations of the great gods;
As stars, their likenesses as constellations of the zodiac he placed.
He ordained the year, into parts he divided it,
For the twelve months he established three stars.

The creation of man is related also in another Babylonian poem, the Gilgamesh epic:

> The goddess Aruru, when she heard this,
> A man like Anu she formed in her heart.
> Aruru washed her hands;
> Clay she pinched off and spat upon it;
> Esbani, a hero she created,
> An exalted offspring with the might of Ninib.

The points of likeness between the Babylonian Creation Epic and the Priestly account of creation in Genesis briefly are as follows: The Epic is recorded on seven tablets, and the Genesis account divides creation into seven periods; both accounts assume a total void in the beginning and a primeval chaos flooded over with water; and both explain the making of heaven and earth by a division of these waters. The differences between them, however, are even more significant. In the Babylonian story the gods must first themselves be created and then Marduk must triumph over Tiamat before creation can proceed, while in Genesis Yahweh is present in the beginning and to create needs only to speak; the Babylonian story is polytheistic and its religious conceptions of a comparatively low order, while Genesis is monotheistic and its ideas connote a higher religious development.

The Upanishads of Brahmanism abound in cosmological speculations. Various theories are sponsored—that water was the original world stuff (as in the hypothesis of Thales), that space was the ultimate ground of the universe, and that all creation proceeded from an original cosmic egg. The world is even traced back to "non-being" as its source:

> In the beginning verily this world was non-existent,
> Therefrom verily Being was produced.[10]

One of the finest passages in the Upanishads is the one in which Gargi questions Yajnavalkya. Gargi asks:

> "That which is above the sky, that which is beneath the earth, that which is between these two, sky and earth, that which people call the past, the present, and the future—across what is that woven warp and woof?"
>
> "Across space," is Yajnavalkya's reply.
>
> "Across what then, pray, is space woven?"
>
> "That, O Gargi, Brahmans call the Imperishable."

He does not describe the Imperishable but his discourse concerning it is of such dignity and grandeur as to make his words worthy of a place in any holy book:

> "Verily, O Gargi, at the command of that Imperishable the sun and the moon stand apart. Verily, O Gargi, at the command of that Imperishable the earth and sky stand apart. Verily, O Gargi, at the command of that Imperishable the moments, the hours, the nights, the days, the fortnights, the months, the seasons, and the years stand apart. Verily, O Gargi, at the command of that Imperishable some rivers flow from the snowy mountains to the east, others to the west in whatever direction each flows." [11]

In the Zoroastrian view of creation given in the Zend-Avesta, creation divides into six periods of action and one of rest. Here, too, all mankind are the descendants of one man and one woman, named Mashya and Mashyana. Throughout the Avesta the creation of everything good is ascribed to Ahura Mazda, who, we are also told, strove with Ahriman for nine thousand years and during the last third of this warfare conquered and overthrew him and his evil spirits. The Zend-Avesta offers opportunities for interesting comparison with the corresponding stories of origins in Genesis:

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[10] Chandoya, 6, 2. Hume, *Thirteen Principal Upanishads,* p. 241.

[11] Brihad-Aranyaka, Hume, *op. cit.,* pp. 118-119.

THE CREATION THEME IN LITERATURE

Cædmon, *Paraphrase of Genesis.*
John Donne, *The Younger Genesis.*
Norwich Miracle Play, *Creation.*
Haydn, Josef, *The Creation,* an oratorio.
Milton, John, *Paradise Lost,* Books I-III.
Shaw, George Bernard, *Back to Methusaleh.*

The creation theme has been a constant favorite in both literature and music. Cædmon and Donne are the authors of interesting literary versions of the creation stories. *Creation* is the title of one of the typical miracle plays well worthy of study. Milton furnished Protestantism with its prevailing views on the creation and fall of man. The reader will find it well worth while to compare the first three books of *Paradise Lost* with Genesis. In *Back to Methusaleh* Shaw gives an illuminating and brilliant treatment of some phases of the "Fall" story.

Haydn's oratorio, *The Creation,* draws on both Genesis and Milton. The first two parts are composed of narratives descriptive of the act of creation on successive days told by the angels Raphael, Gabriel, and Uriel, interspersed with choruses and arias. The third part portrays the felicity of Adam and Eve in the garden. Haydn's powers of description appear to advantage in such episodes as the portrayal of chaos, the separation of the elements, the hurling down of Satan, and his picturing of life upon the earth. The exquisite arias, "Rolling in the foaming billows," and "With verdure clad," and the great chorus, "The Heavens are telling," rank among the sublimest creations of music.

F. W. Harvey, in *The Bugler,* has a thought on creation that is worth quoting:[12]

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[12] See George H. Clarke, *A Treasury of War Poetry,* p. 132.

God dreamed a man;
Then, having firmly shut
Life like a precious metal in his fist
Withdrew, his labor done. Thus did begin
Our various divinity and sin.
For some to ploughshares did the metal twist,
And others—dreaming empires—straightway cut
Crowns for their aching foreheads. Others beat
Long nails and heavy hammers for the feet
Of their forgotten Lord. (Who dares to boast
That he is guiltless?) Others coined it; most
Did with it simply nothing. (Here again
Who cries innocence?) Yet doth remain
Metal unmarred, to each man more or less,
Whereof to fashion perfect loveliness.

3. STORIES OF THE FLOOD

The Biblical Flood Story, Genesis 6:13-9:17

One of the most widely disseminated traditions among primitive men is that of a primeval flood. Geologists tell us that floods occurred at various periods of the earth's earlier history, due to the rising and subsiding of the land as the planet settled into its present form. H. G. Wells cites the subsidence of the Mediterranean as the source of the flood stories of western Asia. It is possible that the biblical narrative may be traceable to reminiscences of a deluge in the Tigris and Euphrates valley. This seems quite likely, because the Hebrews migrated from that region and their stories of the flood are similar to those of Babylonia.

As in the case of creation the Bible contains two flood stories, the one early and the other of late authorship. The earlier writer uses the term Yahweh in his reference to God and the later priestly writer uses Elohim. Each of the stories is similar in style to the corresponding creation story. The earlier writer houses seven pairs of clean and one pair of unclean animals in the ark, while the later is content with one pair of each. The priestly writer makes the flood endure longer. He is more precise, also, in his statements of the dimensions of the ark and the length in time of each phase. Both writers omit most of the idolatrous elements of the Babylonian account, but the earlier one represents Yahweh as putting a cover on the ark to shut Noah in and taking pleasure in the smell of the roasting sacrifice. The biblical stories, however, assume an ethical relationship between an imperfect humanity and a just deity. Yahweh will continue to demand of men purity of thought and act, though he will agree never again to drown all living creatures. He gives the rainbow as a token of this promise.

The style is vivid, with mingled prose and poetry, and the composite narrative possesses all the qualities of a good short story. The following rhythmic, short-line verse may be an early folk-song:

While the earth remains
Seedtime and harvest,
Cold and heat,
Summer and winter,
Shall not cease.[13]

For Study and Comparison

Gilgamesh Flood Story, Barton, *Archæology of the Bible,* Part II, Chap. 6.

——, Kent, *Student's Old Testament,* Vol. I.

——, Jastrow, *Civilization of Babylonia and Assyria,* Chap. 8.

Deucalion and Pyrrha, Frazer, *Folk Lore in the Old Testament,* p. 146.

Primitive Flood Stories, Frazer, *Ibid.,* Chap. 4.

The student will be interested to compare the biblical with the Babylonian account contained in the Gilgamesh epic, which he may consult in the works cited. The classic Greek story of the flood, "Deucalion and Pyrrha," runs as follows:

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[13] Genesis 8:22.

> Deucalion was the son of Prometheus. He reigned as king in the country of Phthia and married Pyrrha, the daughter of Epimetheus and Pandora, the first woman fashioned by the gods. But when Zeus wished to destroy the men of the Bronze Age, Deucalion by the advice of Prometheus constructed a chest or ark, and having stored it with what was needful he entered into it with his wife. But Zeus poured down a great rain from the sky upon the earth and washed down the greater part of Greece, so that all men perished except a few who flocked to the high mountains near. Then the mountains in Thessaly were parted, and all the world beyond the Isthmus and Peloponnese was overwhelmed. But Deucalion in the ark, floating over the sea for nine days and as many nights, grounded on Parnassus and there, when the rains ceased, he disembarked and sacrificed to Zeus, the God of Escape. And Zeus sent Hermes to him and allowed him to choose what he would and he chose men. And at the bidding of Zeus he picked up stones and threw them over his head; and the stones which Deucalion threw became men, and the stones which Pyrrha threw became women. That is why in Greek people became Laoi, from laas, "a stone." [14]

The flood story was a favorite theme in the mediæval mystery plays. Not being connected with the immediate theme of salvation it offered free scope for the humor of the time. In one of the flood plays Noah's wife refuses to enter her new floating home unless the members of the ladies club to which she belongs are permitted to join her. Since Noah cannot grant this request her sons feel compelled to pick up their mother and carry her in forcibly. As she enters her response to Noah's quiet greeting, "Welcome wife into this boat," is a round slap in the face. There is another little story as to Noah's domestic difficulties. He had a daughter we are told, not mentioned in the Bible, who had no patience with her father's pious preachments about a coming flood. So she gathered together the younger set of her locality and they sailed across the seas landing in and settling Ireland.

[14] Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca,* i, 7, 2. Quoted from Frazer.

DISCUSSION TOPICS AND EXERCISES

1. Give the principal theories of the origin of myths and discuss the grounds on which they are based.
2. Give some of the classifications of myths and point out those which seem most serviceable to you.
3. Select a number of primitive creation myths for analysis and outline the cosmogony or world view of the peoples concerned.
4. Differentiate between biblical and extra-biblical conceptions in Milton's *Paradise Lost.*
5. Work out the geographic distribution of flood stories.

BOOKS TO CONSULT

On Myths in General

BETT, HENRY, *Nursery Rhymes and Tales,* Chap. 2.
BULFINCH, THOMAS, *The Age of Fable,* Chap. 2.
CURTIN, JEREMIAH, *Creation Myths of Primitive America.*
FISKE, JOHN, *Myths and Myth Makers,* Chap. 1.
GAYLEY, C. M., *Classic Myths,* Chap. 1.
MABIE, HAMILTON, *Norse Stories.*
MÜLLER, MAX, *Chips from a German Workshop,* Vol. II, Lecture on "Comparative Mythology."

On Creation and Flood Stories

BARTON, GEORGE A., *Archæology and the Bible;* see topics.
BEWER, J. A., *The Literature of the Old Testament,* Chap. 5.
FRAZER, J. G., *Folk Lore in the Old Testament;* see topics.
GENUNG, J. F., *Guidebook to Biblical Literature,* pp. 114-119.
GUNKLE, HERMAN, *The Legends of Genesis.*
HUME, R. E., tr., *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads.*
JASTROW, MORRIS, *The Civilization of Babylonia and Assyria,* Chap. 8.
KENT, C. F., *The Student's Old Testament,* Vol. I., Introd., Scripture passages, and Appendix, pp. 360-380.

See also commentaries on Genesis.

CHAPTER IV

THE SHORT STORY

1. The Nature of the Short Story

Since men began to gather around the camp fires and either listen to recitals of human valor or recount their own most exciting adventures, or relate the strange doings of the weird creatures of their imagination, some form of brief tale has continued to cast its spell over the human mind. Thackeray in one of his *Roundabout Papers*, entitled "On a Lazy Idle Boy," paints the picture of "a score of white-bearded, white-robed warriors or grave seniors of the city, seated at the gate of Jaffa or Beyrouth, and listening to the story-teller reciting the marvels of Antar or the 'Arabian Nights.'" In listening to a good story men will forget their more serious interests and children will forego their play. Stories used to pass like folk-songs from lip to lip and thus they became rounded and finished by the touch of a thousand tongues.

Among the Hebrew stories belonging to all classes and periods are examples of the short legendary tales of heroes which are mingled with early folk-lore; also stories more or less akin to the parable and fable intended to teach some lesson; and finally the longer stories which compare well with the best similar stories in other literatures. This chapter will confine itself to such short stories as do not fall within the classification of myth or legend, reserving the fable, parable and allegory for later treatment. We may note also that the short story is to be distinguished from biography and history, although it may be true like history or delineate character as does biography. Its primary aim is not to present facts accurately like history nor to interpret them like biography but the simpler and gracious aim of giving pleasure.

Thus the short story is a distinct species of literature, a separate form of art, a new literary *genre* with a quality and style of its own. Its relation to prose writing is analogous to that of the lyric to poetry; like the lyric for all its brevity it must have unity, and its laws of structure are as exacting as those which the lyric imposes on the poet. Thomas Wentworth Higginson says of the short story: "Here at least we have the conditions of perfect art; there is no subdivision of interest; the author can strike directly in and without preface, can move with determined step to a conclusion, and can—O highest privilege!—stop when he is done."[1] In these factors of brevity and unity Brander Matthews[2] finds the difference between the true short-story (the hyphen is his) and the story that happens to be short. He has done well to insist that the fact that a bit of writing is brief does not in itself make it a short-story. As authentic marks of the short-story he mentions compression, originality, ingenuity, a touch of fantasy, and the fact that no love interest is needed to hold the parts together. Many of the short tales produced in the early periods of history lack that sure and unified handling of the theme which is an essential of the good short story.

The short story differs from the essay or speech, in respect to the progress of its movement, in that the essay proceeds by the logical divisions of thought while the story passes on from action to action. It has many points in common with moving pictures, which appeal through the eye to the imagination and the emotions. Their power to interest is maintained only if the pictures succeed one another rapidly enough to keep the mind busy. If the movement of the story lags the interest vanishes. The universal appeal of the story rests upon the fact that the imagination is the most gifted and sensitive faculty of the human mind. The imagination of the reader must be given free rein, the reason is held in abeyance.

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[1] Thomas W. Higginson, quoted from Bliss Perry, *Prose Fiction,* p. 300.

[2] Brander Matthews, *The Short-Story,* Introd., pp. 1-40.

Professor Perry has pointed out that writers of fiction, whether novelists or short story writers, seek to arouse and sustain the interest of the reader by showing him "certain persons doing certain things in certain circumstances."[3] There are thus three elements in the short story, the characters, the plot, and the situation. The brevity and unity demanded of the short story seldom permit the writer to satisfy these three requirements equally. He must therefore choose which he will stress in a particular story and let the other two play minor rôles. Thus some short stories are mainly concerned with the portrayal of interesting and picturesque characters; they are vignettes of men and women, skillfully etched. The novelist has the added advantage of showing off a character in varied situations, and by these different poses presenting a less sketchy and more faithful portrait. But this latitude is denied to the short story writer. Here there is time for only one pose, one setting, and if that fails all is lost. There is not time to trace the growth and development in detail of the character nor to present a chain of situations and issues. As a compensating advantage for these restrictions all sorts of awkward questions about the characters may be ignored on the score that they are not germane.

Many short stories, however, center attention on the plot and bestow little attention upon character portrayal. If a plot be made sufficiently complicated and interesting we are so carried along by the desire to learn what will happen next that we become poor critics of the persons

[3] Bliss Perry, *Prose Fiction,* p. 307.

involved. In the short story the plot must be so skillful as to take hold of the reader at once, move rapidly from incident to incident, and progress in an ascending scale to the final stroke. Many of the best plots make successful use of a short suspense near the close to throw the reader into a fresh state of uncertainty before letting their solution bring the story to a close.

In respect to plot the short story has begun to borrow from the drama, as well as from the longer novel. On this point Miss Allbright says:

> Indeed, it would seem that the growing emphasis upon *situation* rather than a mere sequence of interesting events, the marked preference for presenting crises in the lives of characters and the "deliberate and conscious use of impressionistic methods" must have been derived in great measure from a study of the technique of the drama. . . . The artificial isolation of a limited number of people and events, the artistic lengthening of the dialogue, the concentration on a single issue, the vivid picturing of a scene that is significant, are essentially dramatic.[4]

Many of the Bible episodes related of Elijah, David, and Daniel possess these dramatic qualities.

Again, precedence may be given to the third element in the short story—situation. Many stories are read not because of interest in character portrayal or plot, but for the entertainment to be gotten out of the situations presented. They are delightful for the same reason that a walk through a garden or a drive through an English hamlet is delightful. To have Bret Harte pilot us through a mining camp or Miss Wilkins act as our guide through a New England village is all that we ask. The stories of Abraham take us for a walk among the tents of a Semitic tribe, amid the sounds of men and beasts. We join Ruth in the grain fields of Palestine and mingle with the harvesters on the threshing floors and the elders at the gates of the city. We gain an insight into the life of the people most delightfully, whereas we should probably never find the time to do so by serious study.

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[4] E. M. Allbright, *The Short Story,* p. 9.

But when all is said in exposition of the technique of the short story and the peculiar merits of its different types the secret of its charm has not been revealed. "The wider truth after all," says Bliss Perry, "is that literary criticism has no apparatus delicate enough to measure the currents, the depths and the tideways, the reactions and interactions of literary forms."[5] One mood takes delight in the stark savagery of a primitive sage, another in the finish of a modern magazine story. "No matter if only a miracle is wrought; if we look out with new eyes on the many featured habitable world; if we are thrilled by the pity and beauty of this life of ours, itself as brief as a tale that is told; if we learn to know men and women better and to love them more."[6]

2. HERO STORIES

Abraham Offering Isaac, Genesis 22:1-19

Abraham is a figure of heroic mold and in the hands of a Homer the cycle of stories clustering about his name might have been woven into an epic. As to the historicity of these narratives theory ranges all the way from granting complete accuracy to the view that Abraham was the name for the personification of a tribe. The conclusion seems unwarranted, however, that such a man as Abraham lived, and that he became the sheik of a tribe and the ancestor of a people, but legend has so embroidered his career that we can no longer distinguish clearly between fact and fiction. The stories themselves are full of local color and delightful description and abound in bold and vivid character delineation.

Abraham has been called "the most august figure of the ancient world." He became the spiritual progenitor of three of the world's greatest religions, Judaism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity. Like a true pioneer he migrated toward the west "not knowing whither he went." He came to found a new nation in a land "not sterile unto death nor fruitful unto luxury." He turned his back upon a people sunken in idolatry, weighed down by superstition, ridden by priests and practitioners of magic, and victims of the sins of their fathers. He went worth, therefore, not because he was the slave of a facile love of change, nor of lust for greater possessions, but because he had distinguished the whisper of the one true God amidst the babel of heathen voices.

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[5] Bliss Perry, *Prose Fiction*, p. 334.

[6] Bliss Perry, *Ibid.*, p. 33.

The story we have chosen marks one of the turning points of his life. A modern drama based on this incident makes Isaac say to his mother on their return from the place of sacrifice, "Mother, I have a new conception of God." Granting that this is reading a little too much into the story, the truth remains that it does picture the occurrence of a great change in Abraham's faith. Abraham learned here that the demand that God made upon him was not for the life of his son but for his loyalty and service. His abandonment of the idea of God which lay back of the cruel and revolting custom of offering children as an act of homage to Him is one of the milestones in the upward journey of humanity. There is no more sublime moment in the stages of religious thought through which the race has passed than the one in which the idea of human sacrifice as a religious act was abolished.

FOR STUDY AND COMPARISON

Jephthah's Vow and His Daughter's Death, Judges 11:29-40.
Agamemnon and His Daughter Iphigenia, Greek mythology.
Lucretius, The Guilt of Religion, Cunliffe, *Century Classical Readings*.
Tennyson, *A Dream of Fair Women*, Stanzas on Jephthah.
Henry Van Dyke, *The First Christmas Tree*.
Prosper Mérimée, "Mateo Falcone," Matthews, *Short-Story*.

Miracle Play, "The Sacrifice of Isaac," Pollard, *Miracle Plays,* p. 21.
Frazer, J. G., "Human Sacrifices," *The Golden Bough.*
Handel's Oratorio, *Jephthah's Daughter.*

It was common practice for the women of India to throw their children into the Ganges to drown in sacrifice to the river god, until the British government put a stop to the practice in 1828. The Carthaginians and Canaanites felt that their gods required especially revolting forms of human sacrifice. In primitive Mexico, once every four years, men and women were roasted in furnaces and their hearts then cut out and offered as a sacrifice to the fire god. At least one tribe of American Indians sent a girl to certain death over Niagara Falls each year as an expiation of the sins of the tribe. It is said to have been the custom of our Teutonic forefathers to slay one child each year as a sacrifice, until Boniface—as related in Van Dyke's story of *The First Christmas Tree*—taught them that since Christ died for their sins this was not required of them.

The story of Iphigenia which deals with this same theme is a Greek classic. Agamemnon had killed a stag sacred to Diana, whereupon the goddess demanded the sacrifice of his daughter, Iphigenia; but at the moment of the intended sacrifice she was snatched away by Diana. Shakespeare was in no doubt about what Jephthah should have done concerning the fulfilment of his rash vow:

> Perhaps thou wilt object my holy oath:
> To keep that oath were more impiety
> Than Jephthah's when he sacrificed his daughter.[7]

Tennyson sings a lament over this hapless girl in his *A Dream of Fair Women.* Lucretius, who looked with an unfavorable eye on all religion, found the custom of human sacrifice a most vulnerable point, and in his "Guilt of Religion" reprobates it most sharply. What more pathetic story than that of the mistaken father in Prosper Mérimée's "Mateo Falcone!"

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[7] *King Henry VI,* Act III.

The Joseph Stories, Genesis 37, 39, 40-41, 42-47

One may look upon the four episodes in the life of Joseph related in Genesis as four detached stories, but there is sufficient connection between them to warrant treating them as one story with a continuous plot and development. In any case this cycle is one of the classics of literature. It is rich in local color, delineates character with a firm and sure hand, incorporates every principle of the short story, and abounds in human interest.

The following analysis is offered as a partial listing of the qualities of human interest in the story:

1. Jacob's favoritism—Rachel's first-born son; the coat of many colors. Joseph's egotism, caused by father's favoritism and shown by dreams. Brothers' jealousy, caused by Jacob's favoritism and Joseph's egotism, which resulted in his sale to Ishmaelites.
2. Swift turns of the wheel of fortune.
   (*a*) A favored son sold into slavery in a foreign country.
   (*b*) Rapid rise to position in Potiphar's house.
   (*c*) Sudden fall owing to hatred of Potiphar's wife.
   (*d*) Rise to position as food controller of Egypt.
   (*e*) Benjamin caught with the stolen cup and the consequent recognition of Joseph.
3. Examples of poetic justice.
   (*a*) Joseph sold to the Ishmaelites. Isaac, the grandfather of Joseph, was Abraham's favored, while Ishmael, the ancestor of those slave dealers, was his rejected son.
   (*b*) Judah made the motion to sell Joseph and lied to his father; later he became surety for Benjamin and his offer to become Joseph's slave saved Benjamin.
   (*c*) The entire plot turns on poetic justice. Brothers sell Joseph into slavery to harm him; that act proves to be his making.
4. Strong human passions are revealed: parental love, egotism, jealousy, lust, loyalty, faithfulness, forgiveness, and suffering on behalf of others.

5. The clever use of dreams as an aid to plot and character analysis.
6. The theme of a poor immigrant lad in a foreign land.
7. The overcoming of evil by good and an outcome of good to the very men who planned the evil. The treason of the brothers ends in a new loyalty on the part of the whole family.

For Study and Comparison

An Egyptian Story, "The Two Brothers," Clark and Lieber, *Short Stories.*

Ruskin, John, *The King of the Golden River,* Macmillan Pocket Classics.

A Ceylon Story, "Manavama," Fleming, *Stories of the Early World.*

A New Zealand Story, "Hatupatu," Fleming, *Ibid.*

George Hodges in *The Garden of Eden* gives a paraphrase of the Joseph story. For an interpretation of the religious teaching of Joseph's action see Josiah Royce, *The Problem of Christianity,* Vol. I, pp. 365 f.

Gideon and the Three Hundred, Judges 6 and 7
David and Goliath, I Samuel 17

These two stories will always remain popular, because the action is vividly portrayed, skill and strategy are shown, tense situations and moments abound, and the victory in each case is won by the right side owing to the prowess of the heroes. They are perhaps the most strikingly dramatic of all biblical stories.

Gideon is an authentic historical figure of the period of the Judges. After the death of Deborah and Barak no leader had arisen in Israel who was able to deal successfully with the incursions of the desert tribes. The great hordes of Midianites which had settled in the region of the Jordan had gradually reduced the Israelites to a state of vassalage. In one of their plundering forays these Midianites killed some of the brothers of Jerubbaal, better known as Gideon ("The Hewer"). The sacred law of blood revenge imperatively demanded that he avenge this deed. With a band of three hundred rigorously selected men he hotly pursued the Midianites, caught them off guard, put them to flight and captured two of their princes. These princes admitted that they had slain some Hebrews who looked something like Gideon and for this they were put to the sword. In the course of his campaign Gideon asked the Israelitish towns of Succoth and Penuel for food for his men but the elders refused it to him for fear of retaliation by the Midianites. On his way home Gideon thrashed those elders with birches of thorns and briers, an incident which Tennyson deemed a fitting counterpart of England's chastisement of the haughty Napoleon:

> at Trafalgar yet once more
> We taught him: late he learn'd humility,
> Perforce, like those whom Gideon school'd with briers.[8]

The offer of kingship made to Gideon introduced the monarchical idea into Hebrew history. He made an ephod of gold and made Ophrah the religious and political capital of the tribes. In further warfare with the Midianites he broke their power, so that they ceased to be a menace to the tribes of Israel.

The stories of David are popular hero tales which bear the marks of retelling through many generations. Various versions arose which display inconsistencies and contradictions. A tendency to dress up the events, heighten the dramatic in the incidents, and idealize the hero are apparent in the stories as we have them. The student is referred to Kent and other scholars for a critical discussion of the various versions.[9]

Robert Graves, in an elegy to "D. C. T.," killed at

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[8] Alfred Tennyson, *Bonaparte.*

[9] C. F. Kent, *Student's Old Testament,* Vol II, pp. 80 f.

Fricourt, March, 1916, uses the story of David and Goliath but insists that

> the historian of that fight
> Had not the heart to tell it right.

Amid the cynical laughing of Goliath

> David calm and brave,
> Holds his ground for God will save.
> Steel crosses wood, a flash and oh!
> Shame for beauty's overthrow!
> (God's ears are dim, his eyes are shut).
> "I'm hit! I'm killed!" young David cries,
> Goes blindly forward, chokes and dies,
> And look, spike-helmeted, grey, grim,
> Goliath straddles over him.

For Study and Comparison

Mabie, Hamilton, "How Thor Fought the Giant," *Norse Stories,* Chap. 11.
Van Dyke, Henry, "A Brave Heart," *The Ruling Passion.*
——, "The Keeper of the Light," *Ibid.*
A Japanese Story, "The Forty-seven Ronins," Clark and Lieber, *Short Stories.*
Arthurian Legends, "Arthur and the Giant."

See George Hodges, *The Garden of Eden,* for a paraphrase of the stories.

3. Stories of Friendship

The Story of Ruth, Book of Ruth

Goethe speaks of the story of Ruth as the "loveliest little idyl"—a characterization on which every discerning reader will set his seal. In answer to the question as to why he did not write a poem on it a poet replied, "I dare not lest I mar that which is already perfect." In the Hebrew Scriptures it was grouped with the five Megilloth or "little classics" and was read at the joyful feast of Pentecost. When the Old Testament was translated into Greek the book fell into its present place after Judges.

Since the story is set in rough days of warfare it gives a hint of the amenities which might crop out even in a time when every man "did that which was right in his own eyes." Here is a situation in which extreme poverty does not behave abjectly nor wealth condescendingly, where women could be tenderly affectionate and loyal and men generous and honorable.

The book of Ruth did not reach its present form until the fifth century B.C., the legalistic era of Ezra and Nehemiah, in which marriage with foreign women was forbidden and the ban ruthlessly enforced. The writer cites this case to show that ideal relations of love and fidelity might prevail in families of mixed origin, that the ancient marriage customs were more tolerant than the existing ones, and that from the Moabites, with whom the newer marriage law forbade fellowship, might come the most devoted and faithful of wives. At the close he adroitly points out that David, the idealized hero of Israel, was the great-grandson son a Moabitess. No interracial love story has ever been more delicately told.

Many customs of the time or locality are pictured or suggested. We become acquainted with the gleaners in the harvest field, the meal on the threshing floor, the courtesies shown by men toward women, the assembly of the elders as a law court at the gate, the levirate marriage custom by which the near of kin takes to wife the widow of a dead relative, the taking off of a shoe and handing it to another as the seal of a contract, and many other usages.

It has been suggested that for her answer to Naomi Ruth may have taken an early folk-song:

> Entreat me not to leave thee,
> Nor to return from following after thee;
> For whither thou goest I will go;
> And where thou lodgest I will lodge:

And thy people shall be my people,
And thy God my God;
Where thou diest will I die,
And there will I be buried.

Read and analyze Rudyard Kipling's story, *Without Benefit of Clergy*, the love story of an Englishman and a Hindu woman.

David and Jonathan, I Samuel 18:1-16; 19:1-17

The story of this friendship reveals its full significance only when Saul's jealousy and the precarious situation of the prince, Jonathan, are taken into consideration. In view of their respective social positions David has everything to gain and Jonathan much to lose by their common friendship. Apart altogether from any apprehensions which Jonathan may have felt over the possible loss of the kingdom, he exhibits a remarkable unselfishness in his treatment of David. He is rewarded by the sincere friendship of David in return and by the generous treatment later accorded by him to his father Saul. On two occasions David spares the life of his father:[10] once when he takes the spear from the side of Saul's bed in camp in the Wilderness of Ziph (I Samuel 26:1-16); and again in the Wilderness of Engedi upon the Wild Goat's Crags, when David cuts off a piece of Saul's garment but lets him go unharmed (I Samuel 24:1-15). On this latter occasion David holds out the flag of truce to Saul and when the king responds graciously David registers an oath not to exterminate the family of Saul (verses 16-22). The story of this friendship is fittingly crowned by the final lament of David over Saul and Jonathan when king and prince lose their lives in battle with the Philistines on Mt. Gilboa.[11]

[10] Most scholars regard the two incidents as different versions of the same event. Kent puts the first under the "Early Judean Narratives" and the second in the "Popular Judean Stories."

[11] David's lament, or elegy, is in II Samuel 1:19-26, quoted on page 154f.

FOR STUDY AND COMPARISON

BRET HARTE, *Tennessee's Partner.*
ROBERT BURNS, *John Anderson.*

Compare also the classic stories of friendship, *Damon and Pythias,* and *Nisus and Euraylus* in Greek mythology, and the story of *Roland and Oliver* in the Charlemagne legends.

4. ESTHER AND JUDITH

The Story of Esther, Book of Esther.
The Story of Judith, Apocrypha.

Compare Jean Racine's drama, *Esther,* translated by Boswell, John Masefield's drama, *Esther,* adapted from Racine, and Arnold Bennett's drama, *Judith.*

Like Ruth the book of Esther is one of the five Megilloth and is read annually at the Feast of Purim. It undertakes to derive the word Purim from *pur,* meaning "lot" (9:24), but no such word is known to scholars to-day. The time of the story is said to be the third year of Xerxes (485-465 B.C.), but it is impossible to identify Vashti or Esther as historical persons. The book does not mention the name of God and is of no particular religious value.

It is, however, a capital story. There is a skillful plot, dramatically developed, which has a most amazing court conspiracy for its setting. How thrilling that an obscure Jewish girl should figure in so grand an intrigue at the court of an emperor who held her people in bondage. The story is notable for resourcefulness of invention, originality, the interplay of strong characters, and a remarkable balancing of forces. Esther, the Jewish maiden, as much a stranger as the beggar girl before King Cophetua, makes a place for herself in the affections of the emperor. She is soon in full command of the situation, lays her plans well, matches her wit against that of the crafty Haman, deftly handles Xerxes, and finally with a master stroke has Haman hung on the gallows which he had erected for Mordecai and saves her people from destruction. The plot unravels like a work of providence and sustains the reader's interest breathlessly. It has been justly criticized as exalting racial pride and a spirit of vengeance and lacking in religious value, but we are to remember that it is no part of its purpose as a story to teach a moral. It is simply a romantic picture of a topsy-turvy world in which kings walk and beggars are on horseback, and there is really not much glory to be gotten out of the fact that a Jewish girl was the concubine of a lustful king. The story is not a religious message but a literary extravaganza.

Judith, like Esther, is exceedingly beautiful, and her beauty is again the means of saving her people in a great crisis. In motif and development the story is similar to that of Esther, except that Judith plays the game with Holofernes alone. The plot also is simpler. After the Assyrian army has surrounded Jerusalem and cut off the water supply, it is preparing to capture the city. Judith, a beautiful widow, goes forth like a Monna Vanna to the camp of Holofernes, where, as the account graphically puts it, "her beauty took his mind a prisoner." For three days she keeps him at arm's length by the parry and thrust of her wit. On the third day, having dismissed his guards, he falls into a drunken sleep. Judith then stations her maid at the door of the tent, snatches up the sword of Holofernes and severs his head from his body and puts it in her bag. She hastens to the city and places it on exhibition in the light of the bonfire her fellow citizens have built to welcome her. Later, Judith has numerous offers of marriage but she remains a widow and at last is buried by the side of her husband. Its too great length and too prosy treatment in parts detract from the merits of the story. The student should read and enjoy Bennett's fine dramatic version.

Discussion Topics and Exercises

1. Evaluate the biblical stories cited from the standpoint of character delineation, invention, plot, and local color.
2. Write a paraphrase of two of these stories, selecting your own titles.
3. Make a dramatic outline of one story, giving plot, acts, scenes, *dramatis personæ,* and suggested development.
4. Compare the biblical stories with others suggested, in these respects: visual imagery, ingenuity of plot, unity, and human appeal.
5. Select other similar stories for comparison with the biblical stories.

Books to Consult

The Nature of the Short Story

Allbright, E. M., *The Short Story.*
Bryant, Sara C., *How to Tell Stories,* Chap. 1.
Matthews, Brander, *The Short-Story,* pp. 1-40.
Perry, Bliss, *The Study of Prose Fiction,* Chap. 12.
Sherlock, Marie L., *The Art of the Story Teller.*

Biblical Stories

Abbott, Lyman, *The Life and Literature of the Ancient Hebrews,* Chap. 7, Hebrew Fiction; Chap. 8, Some Hebrew Stories Retold.
Bewer, J. A., *The Literature of the Old Testament;* see topics.
Cadbury, H. J., *National Ideals in the Old Testament.*
Fowler, H. T., *Great Leaders in Hebrew History.*
Hodges, George, *The Garden of Eden.*
Kent, C. F., *Student's Old Testament,* Vols. I and II.
Phelps, W. L., *Human Nature in the Bible.*
Wood, Irving F., *Heroes of Early Israel.*

On the biblical books studied the *International Critical, Cambridge Bible, New Century Bible,* Dummelow's and Gore's commentaries may be consulted.

CHAPTER V

ILLUSTRATIVE STORIES

1. The Parable, the Fable, and the Allegory

One of the most characteristic types of story in the Bible makes use of a material thing to illustrate a moral or spiritual truth. These stories are told with an art often surpassing that of its short stories, pure and simple, but their primary purpose is different. Their intent is not merely to please but to convey a lesson. Such literary forms were even more popular with early peoples, especially Oriental peoples, than they are with us to-day. The parable is the most common of these forms in the Bible, although the allegory is also fairly well represented. The fable appears occasionally but its vogue among other ancient peoples has been greater. In general, the purpose of the three forms is the same.

The Hebrews had a comprehensive word, *mashal*, which covered all those illustrative figures or stories in which a likeness or comparison was instituted for the purpose of conveying a lesson. This type of literature employs analogy rather than premise and conclusion as its unit of reasoning. As logic was perfected by the Greeks, so was the *mashal* enriched by the Hebrews. It branched out into parable, fable, maxim, aphorism, proverb, allegory, and comparisons of every type and kind in which illustrative figures abound. All these lend themselves to a condensed style and pointed phrasing. The most unique among them, which was also the one carried to the highest degree of perfection among the Hebrews, was the parable—a form which Jesus made such a vehicle of divine truth as to associate it permanently with his name.

The parable and the fable are both story forms in which there is a resemblance between phenomena on one plane of life or experience and that of another. Both are really lengthened similes. Fables, however, part company with parables in that they credit plants and animals with emotions and actions, such as speaking, which only human beings actually possess. The parable may draw upon any plane of life, but it never attributes to animals or plants any experiences other than those native to them. The fable proceeds on the assumption of a kinship between men and animals similar to the animistic view of the traits which they possess in common. Indeed, the fable is thought by some to have originated in India, a country where the animistic view of nature is very pervasive. However, most of us are able to shed our matter-of-factness for the time being in reading fables and not mind their making animals act and talk like ourselves. In the parable, on the other hand, strict fidelity to nature is maintained; all the characters appear and act as they do in ordinary life. Nevertheless, most parables make good stories in their own right and are worth the telling for their own sake.

The fable and the parable differ further in this respect: the fable is usually in a lighter vein than the parable. The fable may jest or ridicule the follies and foibles of men or laugh at their sins; not so with the parable. The inherent humor of the situation may be manifest in the parable but its object is a serious one. Again, the lesson which the fable draws usually is a piece of clever expediency, natural sagacity, adaptation of ends to means, or worldly wisdom. The appeal of the parable, on the other hand, is to the higher emotions, deep religious convictions, and lofty resolves. Æsop taught worldly wisdom; Jesus taught eternal spiritual truths.

Dr. Barton,[1] writing as "Safed the Sage," is the author of a parable entitled "The Cable and the Line." As the boat on which he and his granddaughter were passengers came to land the sailors threw out a line to men on the dock and then fastened the stout hawser cable to the line. With the aid of the line the dock-hands drew the cable, which was strong enough to hold the great ship to the dock, and fastened it to the posts. The parable continues:

> And I said, the use of the Line and Cable doth involve a Principle whereof the Good God doth make large use. For He doth cast a Small Line, like the Life of a Little Child, between us and the Ideal, and the Line doth become a Cable of Habit and Conviction that moors us to the Infinite.
>
> And she said, "Grandpa, is that a Parable?"
>
> And I said, It is. And a Parable is a slender Line thrown across between the Real and the Ideal, and mayhap, it shall draw after it Strong and Enduring Lessons that hold us fast to the Truth.
>
> And she said, "Grandpa, I think I understand."
>
> And I said, I will write, and it may be others also will understand.

We now inquire as to the distinctive difference between the allegory and the parable. The parable or fable is a lengthened simile wherein the points of resemblance are referred to directly, while the allegory is a lengthened metaphor in which a characteristic of a foreign object or class of objects is assigned to a person or thing of another order. When Jesus told a parable he said, "The kingdom of heaven is like . . ." but when he told the story of the Good Shepherd he said, "I am the Good Shepherd." The first is a parable, the second an allegory. In the allegory the surface meaning is completely subordinated to the purpose in hand and things do not pass for their ordinary selves but take on a special meaning assigned to them on this one occasion. Allegory, unlike the parable or fable, tends at once toward personification, which takes abstract virtues and puts bone and flesh on them. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* loses all reality on its own merits as a story; its characters are simply the personifications of Christian virtues and worldly vices. The distinction under discussion is neatly shown in I Peter 2:25, where the first figure is a simile and the second a metaphor: "Ye were going astray like sheep; but are now returned unto the Shepherd of your souls."

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[1] Dr. William E. Barton, *Christian Century*, 1927.

There is another distinction between the parable and the allegory: the parable usually occupies itself with one point or lesson, other elements being mere trappings, whereas the foreign characteristics on which the allegory turns persist throughout the entire story. In the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins the single point at issue is a question of foresight; in the stories of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven it is the ability to multiply; in the stories of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl it is a question of how high a price to pay for what is deemed most worth while in life. In the parable of the Unjust Judge the point is not a question of judicial fairness but the persistence of the suppliant. In the case of the parable the comparison rests upon the similarity between a single point in the situation described and the principle or lesson sought to be enforced. In the allegory each person or thing may have a double meaning which is constantly maintained throughout the story. The emphasis in the allegory is more upon attributes and in the parable upon the relation of things to each other.

That such forms as the fable and the parable were popular favorites is evidenced by their wide diffusion in many countries and ages. The fables of India have descended through the Pehlevi into the Arabic, the Greek, the Hebrew, and the Latin all the way into various European lores. All the later compilers of fables, as, for example, La Fontaine, have culled the old stories of India and Arabia, and the tales of early fabulists such as Æsop and Babrius, telling and retelling them in a score of variations. Max Müller traces the itinerary of one of these fables on its migrations from the *Panchatantra* of India.[2] It is the story of a Brahman who dreamed of a pot of rice which he would sell for an exorbitant price during famine times; he would then buy goats, then sell the goats and buy cows, and so on until he was very rich. But in the course of his dreams he kicked over the pot of rice and his hopes of wealth were ruined. In the Arabic collection of *Kalilah and Dimnah* this story is told of a merchant with a pot of honey and butter. In La Fontaine it becomes the delightful fable, *Le Laitière et le Pot au Lait,* in which Pierrette marching along with the pail of milk on her head dreams of selling the milk for a goodly sum, then buying a hundred eggs to set and selling the chickens, until she stumbles and spills the milk. Centuries ago this story crossed into Europe and was used by Christian teachers in their moralizings. It occurred in an old Latin book, *Dialogues of Creatures Moralized.* In our time its lesson is expressed in the proverb, "Don't count your chickens before they are hatched." As between the two forms the parable may not have had as wide a vogue as the fable, but it occupies an honored place in many literatures.

2. FABLES

Jotham's Fable, Judges 9:8-15
King Jehoash's Fable, II Kings 14:9-14

Jotham's fable, poetic in form, is indeed one of the most remarkable of the early poems of the Bible. Has the difficulty of getting good men to run for public office ever been better expressed?

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[2] Max Müller, "On the Migration of Fables," in *Chips from a German Workshop,* Vol. IV, pp. 145 ff.

Hearken to me, lords of Shechem,
    that God may hearken to you!

The trees went forth on a time
    to anoint them a king,
And they said to the olive, "Reign over us!"
    But the olive said unto them;
"Should I leave my fatness
    which gods and men prize in me,
And go to sway over the trees?"

Then the trees said unto the fig-tree,
    "Come thou and reign over us!"
But the fig-tree said unto them,
    "Should I leave my sweetness
And my good fruit
    and go to sway over the trees?"

Then the trees said unto the grape vine,
    "Come thou and reign over us!"
But the grape vine said unto them,
    "Should I leave my wine
That cheers gods and men,
    and go to sway over the trees?"

Then said all the trees unto the thorn,
    "Come thou and reign over us!"
And the thorn said unto the trees,
    "If in truth ye anoint
Me as king over you,
    Then come take refuge in my shade,
But if not fire shall proceed from the thorn,
    and devour the cedars of Lebanon." [3]

When King Amaziah of Judah had presumptuously challenged Jehoash, King of Israel, to war, King Jehoash replied with the second of our two fables:

> The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife;

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[3] Translation by Bewer, *Literature of the Old Testament,* p. 11. This poem seems to voice the feeling of many Israelites on the subject of installing a king over the nation in the period just preceding the establishment of the monarchy.

> and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon and trod down the thistle.

In the sequel Jehoash defeated Amaziah and captured and looted Jerusalem.

For Study and Comparison

Fables of Æsop, Babrius and La Fontaine.[4]
The Arabic Fables of Bidpai.
Ryder, A. W., ed., *The Panchatantra.*

The following is an old Hindu fable entitled "The Snake's Head and Tail," as adapted by Tolstoy:

> The Snake's Tail had a quarrel with the Snake's Head about who was to walk in front. The Head said, "You cannot walk in front because you have no eyes and ears."
>
> The Tail said, "Yes, but I have strength, I move you; if I want I can wind myself about a tree and you cannot get off the spot."
>
> The Head said, "Let us separate."
>
> And the Tail tore himself loose from the Head and crept on; but the moment he got away from the Head he fell into a hole and was lost.[5]

The following fable of "The Monkey and Her Baby" is chosen at random from Æsop:

> Jupiter issued a proclamation to all the beasts offering a prize to the one producing the most beautiful offspring. Among the rest came the monkey carrying a baby monkey in her arms, a hairless, flat-nosed, little fright. When the gods saw it they all laughed, but the mother hugged her little one to her and said, "Jupiter may give the prize to whomsoever he likes but I shall always think my baby the most beautiful one of them all."

The fable of the "Fox and the Fish" is of Jewish origin and dates from the days of a Roman persecution, in which the study of the Torah was forbidden:

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[4] On Æsop see *Harvard Classics,* Vol. 17. Warner, *Library of the World's Great Literature,* gives selections under each name. Other editions may be available.

[5] Quoted from Laura Wild, *A Literary Guide to the Bible,* p. 103.

A fox, walking along the river bank, was startled by the sudden commotion of a fish moving about as if seized with a sudden fear.

"From whom are you fleeing?" asked the fox.

"We are seeking to evade the nets spread to capture us," said the fish.

"Come up here on the dry land," said the fox, "and you and I shall dwell together in peace, even as our ancestors did in the days gone by."

"You who are famed to be the craftiest of creatures," replied the fish, "are proving yourself to be the most stupid of all living things. If we fear for our lives in the water, which is our natural home, how much more shall we dread the elements on the dry land, which are naturally so hostile to our very existence?"

"What water is to the fish," proceeded Rabbi Akiba, "the Torah is to Israel. It is his only proper element." [6]

3. PARABLES

OLD TESTAMENT PARABLES

1. Nathan's Parable of the Lamb, II Samuel 12:1-14.
2. The Woman of Tekoa, II Samuel 14:1-20.
3. The Vineyard, Isaiah 5:1-7.

The prophet Nathan used his parable of the lamb to rebuke King David for his shaming of Uriah the Hittite through his sin with Uriah's wife, Bathsheba.

The woman of Tekoa was a widow whom Joab, King David's commanding general, sent before the king to feign sorrow for a son who had killed his only brother. Her family wanted to kill this son in retaliation and she pled for his safety so that her husband's name might not perish from the earth. The parable formed part of a plan designed to get David to invite Absalom, his son who had fled the city, to return home. The plan succeeded.

THE PARABLES OF JESUS

The parable is the most characteristic form of Jesus' teaching. While Mark's statement (4:34) that "without a parable spake he not unto them" is doubtless an exaggeration, yet if we take the broader meaning of the word in the Hebrew (*mashal*) it perhaps is not far from sober fact. Mark's suggestion, however, that Jesus taught in parables in order to hide his truth from easy apprehension is based on a misinterpretation of the passage in Isaiah which is quoted in confirmation (Mark 4:12). Jesus used the parable because it was an effective and natural means of teaching.

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[6] Quoted from *Jewish Tract No. 7,* Tract Commission, Union of Hebrew Congregations, Central Conference of American Rabbis.

Several qualities of Jesus' mind and method are worthy of notice here. The first is his gift of clear and accurate observation. Glover calls Jesus the "Son of Fact." He saw the world clearly with an eye single and in proper focus. He seemed to hear the heart of things speaking out loudly to him. In the words of Cromwell he "Spoke things." He kept the edges of truth trimmed, and life as he saw it wore no aura of unreality or sentimentality. This enabled him to see through the hypocrisies and sophistries of men. His illustrations are clear and to the point and their application is unmistakable.

In the second place his quickness of perception is remarkable. Often, as in Mark 8:13, we catch him in the act of sensing the drift of his questioners' thoughts, divining what they are seeking and responding most appositely at once. Again the flexibility with which he always accommodated the form of his teaching to the person to be taught is noticeable. His vivid imagination and his interpretative sympathy led his mind swiftly to occupy a place alongside his fellows on the plane of their experience, and this enabled him to minister to their needs with an intelligence which amazed them.

Jesus also shows in his sayings a keen sense of humor and a gentle, restrained irony. His humor frequently finds an outlet in the ludicrous juxtaposition of the extremely big and the extremely little. The man with a beam in his own eye on the lookout for a mote in his neighbor's eye is a case in point. Another appears when the servant who has himself been forgiven the sum of twelve million dollars chokes his fellow servant for not paying him a debt of seventeen dollars. Still another instance is the saying, "strain at a gnat and swallow a camel." Did the people who listened to Jesus see the sheer realism of such a contrast and not smile at the irony of it all? And what hidden though restrained irony there is in the saying about casting your pearls before swine!

Another interesting feature of Jesus' teaching is his use of what Professor Wendt calls "complementary parables," that is, two or more for the purpose of illustrating different phases of the same truth. Such are the parables of the Leaven and the Mustard Seed. The parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl of Great Price form another pair, as do also the two of the Unjust Judge and the Friend at Midnight. The best example of a parable accompanied by a key to its application is the parable of the Sower illustrating the four kinds of soil.

It was Augustine who said that the miracles of Jesus are parables. Certainly his parables are miracles of beauty. In the introduction to a complete edition of his works Bret Harte declared it to be his rule to "conform to the rules laid down by a great Poet who created the parable of 'The Prodigal Son,' and 'The Good Samaritan' whose works have lasted eighteen hundred years and will remain when the present writer and his generation are forgotten."

PARABLES FOR STUDY [7]

Four Types of Mind (Matthew 13:1-23), Varieties of human nature.

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[7] The other parables not mentioned above are: The Wheat and the Tares and the Drag Net in Matthew 13; The Dancing Children, Matthew 11:16-18; The Two Sons and the Wicked Husbandmen, Matthew 21:28-44; The Wedding Garment, Matthew 22:1-14; The Faithful and Unfaithful Servants, Matthew 28:45-50; The Barren Fig Tree, Luke 13:6-9; The First Places and the Marriage Feast, Luke 14:7-24; Lazarus and the Rich Man, Luke 16:19-31; Publican and Pharisee, Luke 18:9-14. We may perhaps include The Two Debtors, Luke 7:40-43, and the Cloth and Wine Skins, Matthew 9:14-17.

Mustard Seed—Leaven (Matthew 13:31-33), Growth of the Kingdom.
The Corn and the Ear (Matthew 4:26-29), The principle of development.
The Hidden Treasure—Pearl (Matthew 13:44-45), Life's *summum bonum.*
The Talents (Matthew 25:14-30), Use or lose.
The Wise and Foolish Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13), Life's snap tests.
The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37), Life's wayside duties.
The Friend at Midnight (Luke 11:5-8), The friendly host.
Coin, Sheep, Prodigal Son (Luke 15:3-32), God finding lost folks.
The Shrewd Servant (Luke 16:1-13), The wisdom of the world.
The Unforgiving Servant (Luke 18:23-35), Hardening of the heart.

FOR STUDY AND COMPARISON

FROUDE, JAMES A., "The Bread Fruit Tree," *Short Studies,* p. 529.
NIETZSCHE, FRIEDRICH, "The Rope Dancer," *Zarathustra,* Prologue.
HUNT, LEIGH, "Abou Ben Adhem" (A poetic parable).
BARTON, WILLIAM E., "Safed the Sage parables," *Christian Century.*

The following should be read in connection with the parables of the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan:

BJORNSTJIERNE, BJORNSON, *The Father.*
BRET HARTE, *The Luck of Roaring Camp.*
——, *The Outcasts of Poker Flat.*
TOLSTOY, LEO, "The Penitent Sinner," in *Master and Man.*
——, "Where Love Is There God Is Also," *Works,* Vol. VII, p. 107.

Compare the parable of the Unforgiving Servant with the following "Tale of the Merchant" from the Arabic:[8]

> A merchant who possessed an hundred pounds of iron, being obliged to be absent for a few days, entrusted his stock to the care of a friend, and having at his return demanded to have it returned to him, was answered that the mice had eaten it; to which he made no other reply than that he had heard the

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[8] Quoted from Purinton and Purinton, *Literature of the New Testament,* p. 91.

> sharpness of their teeth extended to the biting of iron, warding off by this declaration all suspicion of incredulity; but as he was going away he chanced to meet the son of his friend and, seizing him, led him away to his own house. On the morrow the father came to him in great haste to ask if he knew anything of his son: the merchant told him that as he was returning home the preceding day he saw a hawk carrying off a young lad who probably might be his son. "Is it credible," exclaimed the father, "or was it ever heard of, that a hawk carried away a child?" "Indeed," answered the merchant, "in a country where mice can eat a hundred pounds of iron, it is not incredible that the hawks should be able to carry off the elephants." Upon this the father confessed his theft, paid the merchant the price of his iron, and demanded his son.

The following parable by Krummacher, entitled "The Fidelity of Uri," may be compared with Jesus' parable of the Wedding Garment:

> A heathen king summoned a pious bishop to his presence, and demanded that he should renounce his faith and sacrifice to idols.
>
> The bishop said, "My Lord and my King, I will not do this."
>
> The the king was very wroth and said, "Knowest thou not that thy life is in my hand, and that I have power to kill thee? One word from me and it will be done."
>
> "I know it," answered the bishop, "but suffer me to tell thee a simile and to put a question for thee to decide upon. If one of thy most faithful servants fall into the hands of thine enemies, who forthwith try to seduce him to become a traitor to thee, but thy servant being immovable thy enemies take all his garments from him, drive him away naked with scorn and derision,—tell me, O King, when he comes to thee wilt thou not give him of thy best robes, and pay with high honor the shame he hath endured?"
>
> Then the king answered and said, "Yes, but to what purpose is this and where has this been done?"
>
> The pious bishop answered, "Behold thou also canst take this earthly garment from me. But I have a lord and master who will give me a new robe. Should I regard the garment and for its sake depart from the faith?"
>
> Then the king said, "Go thy way; I grant thee life." [9]

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[9] A. F. Krummacher, *Parables*. Quoted from Wild, *Literary Guide to the Bible*, p. 105.

The two following are Jewish parables:

> The Emperor's daughter at the sight of Rabbi Joshua exclaimed: "What a pity that such renowned wisdom should be stored in so ugly a casket."
>
> To which the Rabbi replied: "In what does the Emperor, your father, store his wine?"
>
> "In earthen vessels," said she; to which the Rabbi replied that the Emperor should use more costly vessels. When this counsel was followed the wine deteriorated.[10]

> One time a lame man came to a king who admitted him to a garden in which there was a tree with delicious fruit, but he could not walk to the tree to eat of it. Then there came a blind man whom the king put into the same garden, but since he could not see the tree therefore he could not eat of it. Then the lame man, able to see the tree but unable to go to it, and the blind man, able to walk but not to see, joined forces, so that the blind man became legs for the lame man by carrying him on his shoulder and the lame man became eyes to the blind man, directing him to the tree and both were filled.[11]

4. ALLEGORIES

Israel as the Vine, Psalm 8
Two Eagles and the Vine, Ezekiel 17:3-24
The Lion's Whelp, Ezekiel 19:2-9
The Boiling Caldron, Ezekiel 24:1-14
The Olive and the Branches, Romans 11:16-24
Sarah and Hagar, Galatians 4:22-34

Ezekiel prophesied during the years 593 to 571 B.C. His three allegories were meant to apply to Judah and her reigning kings in the period just preceding the deportations into captivity, about 597 to 586 B.C. In the allegory of the two eagles the first eagle represents Babylon, the nation which carried Israel into captivity because of the disloyalty toward her of King Zedekiah, who ruled from 597 to 586 B.C. The other eagle represents the Messiah or Deliverer who will restore Judah. In the second allegory the lioness stands for the house of David and the two whelps for the kings Jehoahaz and Jehoiakin respectively, both of whom ruled before 597 B.C. It describes their fates. In the third allegory the hard lot of the better people of Jerusalem is depicted. Jerusalem is as a rusty caldron and her people as the pieces of meat boiling within it. Babylon, of course, is the oppressor responsible for this fiery ordeal.

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[10] Babylonian Talmud, *Ta'anith, 7a.*

[11] Jewish parables, *Jewish Tract No. 7,* by Rabbi Israel Bettan, published by Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

Paul made an allegory of the olive in an endeavor to relieve the strained relations between Jew and Gentile members of the early church. The cultivated olive is a mirror of the true church, with its roots which are sunk deep in Judaism, and its branches with Jews for twigs. Its wild branches are Gentiles, grafted in as fast as Jews fall away. As contrary to nature as to graft a wild olive upon a cultivated one is the grafting of alien Gentiles into the olive tree of the true church, hence it is plainly an act of God's grace. No Gentile should boast therefore but be duly grateful for his acceptance into Christ's fold.

Paul's use of the Sarah and Hagar allegory is a little far-fetched. He is reverting to a historical situation to strengthen a theological argument. To serve his purpose he makes Ishmael, the rejected son of Abraham, born of the maid, Hagar, stand for the flesh or the law, while Sarah's son Isaac, the "Son of Promise," stands for faith or the gospel. Since the Jews then in his audience as descendants of Isaac are children of faith, they should not desire to live after the law which is for the outcast. He further pairs Ishmael's seed with Mt. Sinai as the citadel of the law, and Isaac's with Jerusalem as the cradle of the gospel. This is a quite common rabbinical way of putting a case and probably reasonably convincing to the Judaizing Christians, whom he had in mind in his use of it.

For Study and Comparison

The Romance of the Rose.
Spenser, Edmund, *The Faery Queene,* Book I.
Dante, Alighieri, *Paradiso, The Divine Comedy.*
Bunyan, John, *Pilgrim's Progress.*

The following allegory of Noah and Satan is taken from modern Jewish literature. It is based on Genesis 9:20, "And Noah the husbandman began and planted a vineyard":

> When Noah began to plant the vine Satan came to him and said, "What art thou planting?"
>
> "A vineyard," replied Noah.
>
> "What fruit dost thou expect to bring forth?" asked Satan again.
>
> "It will yield a fruit that will be sweet to the taste and make the heart joyous," was Noah's reply.
>
> "Let us then cultivate the vine together in equal partnership," suggested Satan.
>
> When Noah had assented to the proposal Satan departed and later returned with a lamb which he forthwith killed and poured its blood upon the roots of the vine. After a while he repeated the same process with the blood of a lion, then of an ape, and lastly with that of a pig. By irrigating the vineyard in this manner Satan indicated the four stages through which a man passes who comes under the influence of wine. After the first cup he acts like a lamb, meek and depressed; after the second he becomes boisterous, bragging of his prowess as if he possessed a lion's strength; after the third or fourth cup he behaves like an ape, performing all kinds of unsightly pranks; when he reaches the stage of drunkenness he becomes a veritable pig, wallowing in dirt and filth.[12]

The vogue of allegory as a method of interpretation in the first centuries of the Christian era led to its abuse. The Greeks used the allegory with the definite apologetic purpose of so interpreting Homer and the ancient writers as to make them appear ethical in their stories and philosophical in their explanations of things.[13] The Christians found in this practice a method of interpreting Scripture which would make it palatable to the Greek taste. Origen was the most adept of all Christian allegorists at this process of "digging wells below the surface." [14] Jacob's ladder at Bethel became for him the symbol of the "incorporeal intelligence" which links man, the earthly, with God, the heavenly. Augustine could take David's killing of Uriah to get possession of his wife, Bathsheba, and by making David represent Christ, Bathsheba the church, and Uriah the world, reach the conclusion that Christ had a right to put the world to death and take the church for his bride. The Alexandrian school of Christian interpreters said that the loaves and fishes used by Jesus for the feeding of the multitudes were the symbols of the law and the gospel respectively. In like manner the act of washing the feet of his disciples was a symbol of the divine unction of the gospel, signifying that it could be carried by them to the ends of the earth. Thus was the simple teaching of Jesus metamorphosed into a vehicle for the typical forms of Greek speculation during the early centuries of the church.

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[12] *Jewish Tract No. 7,* by Rabbi Israel Bettan.

[13] For examples see Hatch, *Hibbert Lectures, 1888,* p. 62 ff.

Later on a new crop of allegories dealing with the struggle of the soul in the world and the work of the Christian graces sprang into being. Many of them took the form of didactic poems composed in imitation of the epic style of Vergil. Such a battle between paganism and Christianity is portrayed in the "Psychomachia" of Prudentius.[15] All sorts of ideas were credited to Old Testament worthies or to pale and bloodless personifications, such as Chastity, Anger, Patience, Pride, Hope, Sobriety, Discord, or Faith. The same thing was done with more restraint in other more worthy literature. William Langland's *The Vision of Piers Plowman* is cast in allegorical form and yet it is a classic of our literature of the social ideal.[16] *The Romance of the Rose*[17] was popular among Christian writers because of the free rein it gave to their fancy. The mystic rose was according to the interpreter the White Rose of Jericho, the New Jerusalem, the White Rose of the Virgin and the beatitude to which no heretic could attain. For the chemists it was the philosopher's stone, for the lawyers the perfect judicial decision; and the physicians hailed it as the universal panacea!

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[14] Origen, *In Gen. Hom.* 13.3, Vol. II, p. 94.

[15] De Labriolle, *History and Literature of Christianity*, p. 461.

The great allegory of Christianity, however, is Spenser's *Faery Queene*.[18] Spenser had intended to write twelve books, one for each of Aristotle's twelve moral virtues, but he never completed the work. The first book, which is the clearest and best, pictures the human soul winning its way to heaven and overcoming every spiritual foe in the process, including the Roman church. Because he had discarded his Christian armor Christian is captured by Anti-Christ and cast into prison. King Arthur slays his jailer, the Giant, and releases Christian from prison. Christian then finds a haven in the House of Mercy, where he is healed. Then he goes forth to conquer the dragon or devil and is finally united to the true, i.e., English church.

Dante's *Paradiso* is the greatest poetic product of the mediæval Catholic church and one of the world's religious classics. It enshrines the very heart of the religion of the Middle Ages in its flight of religious insight and supernal beauty.

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[16] Henry Morley, *English Writers,* Vol. IV, Chap. 12.

[17] *Ibid.,* Vol. IV, Chap. 1. See Morley's very adequate discussion of allegorical literature.

[18] Each character in Spenser's *Faery Queene* has a double significance, one historical and the other ideal. The Red Cross Knight represents St. George and Christian; Una symbolizes the English church and the true or ideal church; Duessa represents Mary, Queen of Scots, and the Roman church; The Faery Queene is both Queen Elizabeth and the Ideal; Orgoglio is Philip II and Anti-Christ; Archimago represents Jesuits and Hypocrisy.

5. The Book of Jonah

One of the finest examples of Jewish Haggadah or literary teaching in the Bible is the book of Jonah. Some call it a parable, others an allegory. It is the product of some unknown prophet or writer during the third century B.C. No one now looks upon it as history, although there did live a zealous nationalistic prophet by the name of Jonah in the reign of Jeroboam II (781-740 B.C.). Why did our prophet choose "Jonah, the Son of Amittai" as his hero? Jonah by derivation means a "dove," which was a symbol for Israel, and the word *Amittai* is from the Hebrew *emeth*, "truth." In this book Jonah may therefore serve as a symbol for the nation Israel or may represent the "Son of Truth." Either of these symbolic meanings would fit in well with the story but no one can say whether the author had either in view.

The other salient element in the story, the miraculous deliverance, is not difficult to understand. Such tales were common among all races. Among inland peoples these deliverances were from dragons, wolves and bears and among sea-going peoples from leviathans, fishes, and sea-monsters. It was at Joppa, the harbor from which Jonah sailed, that the Greeks located their parallel story of Perseus and Andromeda, in which Perseus fights a sea-monster to rescue a fair maiden bound to the rocks. The author simply used the whale for the purpose of his allegory, never dreaming that his commentators would try to force his tale into a straitjacket of historical or biological fact. "It might almost be said," remarks Professor Moore, "that the sea-monster has swallowed the commentators as well as the prophet."

The picture of Jonah is well drawn. He is narrow and intolerant, intensely patriotic and exceedingly zealous for God, but his patriotism is too jealous of other peoples and he lacks the saving grace of love. The skill of the writer in testing Jonah is shown in his choice of the capital of Assyria, the cruel persecutor of the Jews, as the recipient of God's love. When Jonah finds that his God is not so intolerant as he is, he pouts like a child and becomes very angry with Him. He can feel sentimental regret for the gourd but none for the misguided folk of Nineveh, whom he would insist upon having destroyed.

The purpose of the writer was to draw a sharp contrast between God's all-embracing love and any form of nationalism which claims to be its exclusive object. Never has the truth that impartiality is an attribute of God been more fitly presented. God called Jonah to pass the message of his love on to other peoples, but he regarded Him as his people's exclusive possession. Indeed, Jonah is pictured very much as the elder brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son. Faber's lines are a corrective of the same attitude:

For the love of God is broader than the measure of man's mind,
  And the heart of the Eternal is wonderfully kind:
But we make His love too narrow by false limits of our own,
  And we magnify His strictness by a zeal He will not own.[19]

Cornill's eloquent summing up may now well close our discussion:

> More simply the truth was never spoken in the Old Testament, that God as the creator of the whole world, must also be the God and Father of the entire world, in whose loving, kind, and fatherly heart all men are equal, before whom is no difference of nation and confession but only man whom He created in His own image. Here Hosea and Jeremiah live anew. The unknown author of the Book of Jonah stretches forth his hand to these master hearts and intellects. In the celestial harmony of the infinite godly pity the Israelitic prophecy rings out as the most costly bequest of Israel to the whole world.[20]

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[19] F. W. Faber, *There's a Wilderness in God's Mercy.*

[20] C. H. Cornill, *The Prophets of Israel,* p. 173.

FOR STUDY AND COMPARISON

CROTHERS, SAMUEL MCCHORD, "The Doctrinaire."
SCHREINER, OLIVE, "The Lost Joy."
——, "The Hunter."
——, "In a Ruined Chapel"; see her *Dreams*.
WILDE, OSCAR, "The Teacher of Wisdom," *Poems in Prose*.

6. THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

The Gospel of John was written at Ephesus near the close of the first century. We shall assume that the book is a genuine product of Johannine circles, proceeding either from the Apostle John or from his immediate followers. The author says that he has written these things "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name" (John 20:31). His purpose is to show that the life and teaching of Jesus are in substantial accord with the best Grecian thought current in Ephesus in his time. In a sense this gospel forms a bridge between Jewish revelation and Greek philosophy. The point of contact is found in the Greek doctrine of the Logos by which the divine wisdom or intelligence establishes contact with this material world of reality. The creative power back of the origin of the world was for Plato, the *Nous,* and for Philo, *wisdom.* John identifies Christ with that *Logos* or *Divine Wisdom,* and by this incarnation offers to men the solution which they have long sought of the problem of how the divine wisdom or intelligence may associate with matter without suffering pollution.

This gospel differs widely from the Synoptic gospels. In aim, method, and style it varies widely; even its selection of events is not the same. Two of the first three gospels give a description of the birth and childhood of Jesus; John in a prologue bestows an origin on Jesus antedating the creation of the world. In the Synoptics the scene of Jesus' activity is largely in Galilee; in John mainly about Jerusalem. John's narrative of the events of the last week, especially his accounts of Jesus' talks to his disciples, is much more detailed. In the first three gospels the Kingdom of God is the central theme; in John the person of Christ is the pivot on which everything turns. The Synoptics are full of parables, figures of speech referring to natural objects, short, pithy sayings, and brief discussions of concrete ethical problems; in John the method is much nearer allegory and short pithy sayings are lacking, their place being taken by long discourses of a mystical character. The first three attempt to give a descriptive account of the life of Jesus while the Fourth Gospel is avowedly an interpretation.

The Fourth Gospel has other well defined characteristics. Its author seems intent on displaying a minute knowledge of Jewish customs, opinions, and points of view, and a familiarity even to small details with the places he mentions. He gives exact information as to dates and his chronology with slight rearrangement may be made to fit the facts secured from other sources. He introduces a wide variety of characters which he sketches in sharp outline that makes them stand out clearly in the reader's mind. He delights in contrasting pairs; such as light and darkness, life and death, truth and falsehood, good and evil. After his account of every miracle and discourse he notes the varied effects on the people, some of whom believe and others object. His gospel is really composed of a series of seven miraculous "signs," together with the discourses appended to them or arbitrarily inserted here and there.

But that which stands out most prominently in this gospel is its symbolic or spiritual tendency. In any given discourse we cannot always be sure whether we are reading the words of Jesus or John's interpretation of them and of him. John treats Jesus' works and sayings as symbols, a process of spiritualization which is akin to allegory. On this point Professor Scott says:

> The history resolves itself at every point into a sort of allegory which cannot be rightly apprehended without a key. . . . The event as it happened was to him the adumbration, necessarily dim and imperfect, of a spiritual idea. His interest is in the idea, which he regards as the essential thing—the "truth" or inward reality of the fact. He thinks it is not only permissible but necessary to modify the fact so as to bring out more fully or emphatically the idea at the heart of it.[21]

The following seven statements attributed to Jesus illustrate the doubleness characteristic of allegory and also make evident the central place given in this gospel to the person of Jesus:

I am the light of the world.
I am the good shepherd.
I am the bread of life.
I am the water of life.
I am the way, the truth and the life.
I am the vine.
I am the resurrection and the life.

The student will find illustrations of the spiritualizing tendency in the entire book, but he should note especially cases of symbolism like the following:

Christ as the Logos of the world, John 1:1-16.
Turning water into wine,[22] John 2:1-11.
The Bread of Life, John 6.
The Light of the World, John 8:12-20.
The Good Shepherd, John 10:1-18.
The vine and the branches, John 15:1-8.

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[21] E. F. Scott, *The Fourth Gospel*, Chap. 2, pp. 56 ff.

[22] This is the first of the "signs" which John records. The writer evidently meant these signs to be taken as actual occurrences, but he himself was more interested in their inner meaning. We, too, are here concerned only with their inner or spiritual meaning, hence treat the account as allegory.

Discussion Topics and Exercises

1. What educational principles are utilized in the various forms of literature discussed in this chapter?
2. What are the advantages of the parable and the allegory as means of moral instruction?
3. Write out a brief statement of the religious ideas suggested by the parable of the Prodigal Son.
4. Compare the parable of the Prodigal Son and the book of Jonah in these respects: style, portrayal of character, human interest, and central ideas.
5. What was John's principle contribution to our understanding of Jesus?
6. Compose a parable based on some proverb or short saying of Jesus.

Books to Consult

On Parables, Fables and Allegories

Hatch, Edwin, *Hibbert Lectures, 1888,* Chap. 3.
La Fontaine, *Fables,* Wright's Edition, Introd.
Müller, Max, "On the Migration of Fables," *in Chips from a German Workshop,* Vol. IV.
Ryder, Arthur W., ed., *The Panchatantra,* Introd.
Wild, Laura, *A Literary Guide to the Bible,* Chap. 3, Sec. 4.

Parables of Jesus

Bruce, A. B., *The Parabolic Teaching of Christ.*
Dods, Marcus, *Parables of Our Lord.*
Krummacher, F. A., *Parables.*
Genung, J. G., *Guidebook to Biblical Literature,* 548-554.
Glover, T. R., *The Jesus of History,* Chaps. 3, 4.
Wendt, H. H., *The Teaching of Jesus,* Vol. I, Sec. II, Chap. 1.

Jonah

Abbott, Lyman, *The Life and Literature of the Ancient Hebrews,* pp. 192-200.
Bewer, J. A., *The Literature of the Old Testament.*
Crothers, S. M., *The Doctrinaire.*
Fowler, H. T., *A History of the Literature of Ancient Israel,* pp. 313 ff.
Genung, J. F., *op. cit.,* pp. 418-423.
Moulton, R. G., *Literary Study of the Bible,* pp. 246-249.
Smith, J. M. P., *The Prophets and their Times,* pp. 220-227.

The Gospel of John

Dods, Marcus, *The Gospel of St. John,* Expositor's Greek Testament.
Gardner, Percy, *The Ephesian Gospel.*
Goodspeed, E. J., *The Gospel of John.*
Robinson, B. W., *The Gospel of John.*
Scott, E. F., *The Fourth Gospel.*
Sanday, W. F., *The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel.*

See also commentaries and Introductions for historical facts and explanations.

CHAPTER VI

BIOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

1. THE DEVELOPMENT OF BIOGRAPHY

ONE of the greatest steps in mental and social progress is the rise of self-consciousness, when man begins to think of himself as an individual differentiated from other men. As this notion of himself becomes more firmly grasped the individual becomes what the Romans called a *persona*, with social rights, obligations and responsibilities. All social and moral progress is conditioned upon this fundamental fact of individuality and the relations which it establishes between the individual and society. After man begins to think of himself as a person the instincts of self-preservation and reproduction, which have hitherto operated only on the biological plane, begin to exert a formative influence in the social realm. Conscious now not only of the present but of the past and the future he begins to keep a record of his acts, take note of his achievements, and devises ways and means like drawings on the walls of his cave for the purpose of keeping his memory alive among his descendants.

Biography and history are indicative of this immemorial desire of men that posterity shall keep their memories alive. In the case of history it is the achievements of the group which are preserved; in the case of biography it is the achievements of the individual. Art is a rival of biography and history in preserving the memory of the departed, but as Jacques Amyot, the French translator of Plutarch, has said: "There is neither picture nor image of marble, nor arch of triumph, nor pillar nor sumptuous sepulcher, can match the durableness of an eloquent biography, furnished with the qualities which it ought to have."[1] This is in line with Fuller's remark that biography is the safest way to protect a memory from oblivion. The Italian poet Ariosto in an allegorical mood imagined that at the end of the thread of life of every man a medal stamped with his name hung suspended. As Death cut that thread Time seized the medal and dropped it into the river Lethe. A very few of these medals were seized by swans who carried them off in their bills and deposited them in the museum of biography. The biographers are the swans.

As we study the writings of the Hebrews and the Greeks we become sensible that they are an intermixture of biography and history. Who possesses a wit keen enough to separate the biographical from the historical in the story of David? Where does story end and history begin in the books of Judges and Samuel? Xenophon wrote the *Cyropædia* which has been classified as biography in spite of the fact that his description includes the campaigns and administrations of Cyrus, which are obviously history. It is to be noted, however, that the Greeks gave more recognition to individuality and tended to produce true biography, whereas the Hebrews were interested in individual lives only as they contributed to the achievements and glory of their nation. The sermons of the prophets survive but often little or nothing of the events of their lives. In the historical books of the Bible there is a great deal of biographical material mingled with the accounts of campaigns and the achievements of the nation. The editors who assembled this material did not ask which was which, since they knew no reason for making the distinction.

In his survey of learning Bacon calls attention to two types of history: the "history of times" or the annals of a state, and the "history of action" or the social and economic achievements of a people. He distinguishes both of these from "lives" or biography in the usually accepted sense of the term. The historian's proper sphere is to describe those group movements of men by which political and social institutions are fashioned, to discover the causes which have operated to produce them, and to trace the results which followed. The biographer centers his attention upon an individual and his interest in his subject's social and cultural milieu is only for the assistance which it may give in helping him to understand this individual.

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[1] Quoted from Sidney Lee, *Principles of Biography*, p. 8.

The first quality of competent biographical writing is candor. Leslie Stephen remarked of a certain biography that it was "too long and too idolatrous."[2] The biographer must attempt in his estimates to hold the scales even. The ideal in this respect is best stated in Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*, where Brutus says that the record of Cæsar's life in the Capitol presents the Dictator's glories "wherein he was worthy" by the side of his "offenses wherein he was unworthy." Although Boswell was the worshipful satellite of Johnson he nevertheless had a certain candor which saved him from falling into the pitfalls of biographical idealization. When some one asked him to suppress certain things about Dr. Johnson his reply was that he would not "cut off the doctor's claws nor make his tiger a cat to please anybody." The Old Testament idealizes David because of the love posterity bore him, but portions of it contain also a recital of the darker deeds of his life and the shame which they brought upon him. In fact, the Bible throughout is a very candid book; at times, indeed, it colors some of its pictures too darkly.

Another quality of the good biographer is skill in the use of source material. He must sift his material in an endeavor to separate the core of fact from its later accretions and assign to his facts thus acquired no more than their due significance. Many of the biblical stories contain only kernels of fact buried under much that is legendary. In the gospels analysis reveals evidence of the use of written sources, of collections of sayings, of contemporary data, and of the results of personal observation. Much of the Old Testament material is based upon previous written records, and in some cases it has not remained faithful to the originals in the process of blending two accounts of the same event into one. It is hardly good sense to judge such accounts as if they had been written and compiled in accordance with modern standards of historical exactness. Shortcomings in accuracy are to be expected but we should none the less remain sensitive to its vivid and candid portrayal of character in living phrase of power and beauty.

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[2] Quoted from Sidney Lee, *Principles of Biography*, p. 38.

In fine, the purpose of biography is to paint an individual man with fidelity, insight, and sincerity. Plutarch possessed in a remarkable degree the ability to detect the unique and individual qualities of his subjects. No two of his "lives" are alike. Again, Xenophon gives us one picture of Socrates and Plato another, but each is unique and both together yield a fuller understanding of the man than either alone could give. Luke's portrait of Jesus differs from both Matthew's and Mark's, but the three of them are all alive. Probably it is not possible to accomplish the ideal and bring forth a complete "life"; no man can penetrate to the bottom of another's personality. But this is the aim of the biographer, a task at which he must labor as an artist, not as an anatomist.

2. HISTORY

Let us at the outset consider one objection frequently urged against biblical history, to the effect that its writers were influenced by a didactic purpose. Those who make this criticism frequently seem unconscious of the fact that much of the best modern history is infected by some economic theory or by philosophical presuppositions which are harder to allow for than the didactic purpose of the ancient writers. People who can quickly point to supposed instances of bias on the part of New Testament writers are often strangely blind to the opposite bias of Gibbon, who would gladly believe any miracle if it militated against the early church. Histories of Europe written by different nationals of the last several decades attest the prejudicial effects of patriotic political and economic views on a fair presentation of the same series of facts. Of course this objection to biblical history is not to be answered by responding merely with a *tu quoque*. The Bible should be and has been submitted to the most critical scrutiny in regard to the accuracy of its historical writings. What the critic has to do in a given case is to determine whether there was a didactic purpose, if so, of what nature, and to what extent allowance must be made for it in order to obtain a correct reading of the facts.

In any case the right of interpretation must not be denied to the historian. We can hardly agree with Balfour when he says that "what in the main has caused history to be written and when written to be eagerly read, is neither its scientific value, nor its practical utility, but its æsthetic interest."[3] Thucidydes wrote to sound an alarm to the Greeks in much the same spirit as an Old Testament prophet. Even Balfour would hardly gainsay the anti-imperialistic bias of Tacitus. These historians were subtle and clever artists, to be sure, but they were writing for something other than their own amusement or the æsthetic enjoyment of the public. When Aristotle asserts that dramatic poetry is superior to history on the ground that poetry takes account of the higher universal truths of life, whereas history is occupied with particular incidents or details, he is denying to the historian his full right to select, arrange, and interpret his material. Were this criterion to be accepted the historian would be relegated to the relatively menial task of the chronicler. True history involves a wide latitude of interpretation and holds its sway because of this fact.

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[3] A. J. Balfour, *Theism and Humanism*, p. 82.

The historical writings of the Bible are rarely genetic or philosophic in method. They aim neither to search out causal relations nor to interest themselves in underlying movements. They belong rather to two other types of historical writing: first, the descriptive or narrative type, in which the object is simply to tell what happened, to narrate a succession of events so that they will form a living picture; or secondly, the didactic type, where history serves as a powerful setting for some moral lesson or commentary upon God's dealings with men. To the first of these belong the books of Samuel, which incorporate the narratives about Samuel, Saul, and David into one whole. From the standpoint of literary style they are excellent prose—fresh, naïve, picturesque and vigorous. Their composition was near enough in date to the events recorded to justify their being regarded as history. But they are not what in this day would be called the best type of accurate historical writing.

The books of Kings and Chronicles belong to the second type. They differ in some respects but are constructed on the same general plan. Both cover the same period and even their arrangement in presenting the various reigns are similar. They name the king, give an account of what he did, name his contemporaries in the rival kingdoms, state that he died and was buried with his fathers, and add their commendation or censure. Bias is evident in Kings, for it comments approvingly upon all the kings of Judah and censures all the kings of Israel. Indeed, in all things Israel is condemned and Judah praised. The author mentions a number of early sources which have perished, such as "The Chronicles of the Kings of Judah," "The Acts of Solomon," and "The Chronicles of the Kings of Israel." The writer of Chronicles carries this same method still further. He may have had access to our books of Kings but if he did he expanded, corrected, and deleted them as he saw fit. He made use of additional source material also, including another book on the reigning kings of the two kingdoms and the records of certain prophets such as Nathan, Gad, Iddo, and Isaiah. Then, too, he must have had access to the Temple records, for his own narrative contains detailed facts about the religious organizations, the priests, the Levites, and the Temple ritual. Very likely he was a priest, for he moralizes a great deal and gives the priestly religion a place of prominence. The book is a bit stiff and lacking in the freshness of the earlier narratives.

How did these writers indicate that they were drawing on their sources? They did not have our modern devices for this purpose, such as introductions, footnotes, inverted commas, parentheses, different types, etc. The fact is that we have no way of knowing when the writers are quoting and when they are setting down their own ideas. Most commonly they used the "scissors and paste" method, copying paragraph after paragraph as they saw fit. Sometimes their copying would be word for word and sometimes they would freely paraphrase. There is no exact method available for detecting the extent or nature of the sources used in the historical writings of the Old Testament, although scholars have analyzed them into their component parts with a high degree of accuracy. Most of the sources themselves are lost. The books of Samuel and Kings bear the same relation to their lost predecessors as the works of Herodotus do to his Ionian chroniclers, or as do Matthew and Luke to Q, Mark, and Proto-Luke. In fact, had it not been for the conviction expressed by Irenæus that there should be four gospels it might have happened (as it almost did) that Mark would have been included among the lost books. The blending of two or more sources into the one document allowed many inconsistencies to creep in, which have been the despair of students. Historical criticism has, however, done great service in its attempts to unravel the sources and appraise the historical value of the biblical writings.

The Old Testament writings received their present form in the later centuries of Jewish national history. It was not until the reigns of David and Solomon that Hebrew historians were masters of the facilities required for recording their facts and keeping connected annals of events. Although each tribe was proud of its own heroes there was no real Israelite consciousness until the days of the monarchy. Only then did the Hebrews achieve such a measure of civilization as to be equipped to keep a permanent record of events. The capital then gradually became the natural center of culture and the depository of these annals and records. During the same period of expansion and intercourse with foreign nations such as Egypt, Phœnicia, and Damascus, systems of writing also were acquired. Recorders and scribes in David's reign became officials of the court who enjoyed a measure of royal patronage. The glorious accounts in the books of Kings of the reigns in which the nation flourished were produced by the beneficiaries of this royal patronage; the disparaging accounts in other parts of the books of Kings were produced in a later age by writers living under Temple and priestly influences.

The history of the Jewish people in our canonical Bible is carried down to the conquests of Alexander, 332 B.C., leaving a period of more than three succeeding centuries concerning which our Bible history is silent. It was during this period that such books as Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel and Ecclesiastes were written or compiled, and many of the Psalms or Proverbs assumed their present shape. These three centuries are most important in the development of Judaism. Then it was that the

Greek and Jewish civilizations met in mortal combat, and that love for Jerusalem, the law, the Temple, and the traditions developed which constituted the Judaism of Jesus' day. In these centuries the messianic hope grew stronger than ever and became one of the controlling forces in the religious life of the Jews. We mention here one book dealing with the history of this period, I Maccabees, which contains a narrative of the Maccabean wars and the establishment of Jewish independence from 168 to 142 B.C. As a vivid and faithful piece of historical writing it is not surpassed by any other Jewish work. Its careful handling of source material, its accurate chronology, and its sober and unbiased presentation of facts, commend it to the student of to-day.

3. READINGS IN BIOGRAPHY

The Life of Saul, I Samuel, chapters 9-31.

Compare Browning's "Saul" as a study in the portrayal of character.

Elijah and Jezebel, I Kings, chapters 17-19.

Compare John Masefield's drama, "The King's Daughter"; a tragedy in verse.

John the Baptist, Matthew 3:1-17, 11:2-19, 14:1-22; Mark 1:1-11, 6:14-29; Luke 1, 3, 7:18-35, 9:7-9; John 1:19-42, 3:25-36.

In a study of John the Baptist compare:
Gustave Flaubert, "Herodias"; a short story.
Oscar Wilde, *Salome;* a drama.
Hermann Sudermann, *Johannes;* a drama.

In a sonnet written three hundred years ago William Drummond of Hawthornden caught the spirit of John the Baptist as he came forth from his rocky solitude:

The last and greatest herald of Heaven's King,
Girt with rough skins, hies to the desert wild,
Among the savage brood the woods forth bring,
Which he than man more harmless found and mild:

His food was locusts and what young doth spring
With honey that from virgin hives distill'd;
Parched body, hollow eyes, some uncouth thing
Made him appear, long since from earth exiled.
There burst him forth: "All ye whose hopes rely
On God, with me amidst these deserts mourn;
Repent, repent, and from old errors turn."
Who listen'd to his voice, obey'd his cry.
Only the echoes which he made relent,
Rung from their marble caves, "Repent, repent!"[4]

The Life of Jesus, Gospels of Mark, Matthew, and Luke

Jesus may have written upon the sand to the discomfiture of the baiters of the unfortunate woman, but he seems never to have written upon papyrus for the benefit of posterity. Neither did his spoken words fall upon the ears of trained reporters but upon the hearts of his loving disciples. An interval of at least thirty-five years must have elapsed between his death and the publication of what we may call the earliest "Life of Christ." This period of oral tradition tended to preserve his teaching in something of its fluid oral form. We may share the sentiment of Emerson, "Do not degrade the life and dialogs of Christ out of this charm by insulation and peculiarity. Let them lie as they befell, alive and warm, part of the human life, and the landscape of the cheerful day." These sayings of Jesus arose along the pathways of life and by the wayside of experience. One of the reasons the disciples were loath to sponsor a written life of Jesus was due perhaps to a feeling that his charm could not be imprisoned on the dead page. This is well expressed by Papias, "I did not think that what was to be gotten from the books would profit me as much as what came from the living and abiding voice."[5] After his words had once been committed to writing they would have a tendency to become set and fixed.[6] The Greeks showed the same reluctance to turn their laws from fluid tradition into unchanging statutes. How justified this feeling was is demonstrated by the sad history of the Christian creeds.

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[4] Quoted from W. L. Phelps, *Human Nature in the Bible*, p. 28.
[5] Quoted from J. F. Genung, *Guidebook to Biblical Literature*, p. 71.

Of course there were other reasons. The church arose from the living testimony of the apostles and as long as they lived on, their converts did not feel any need of a written account of Jesus. It is interesting to note that the first "Life of Christ" (Mark's) was compiled within a very short time of the death of the two leading apostles, Peter and Paul. Another reason seems to be that the Jews generally lacked interest in biography. Canon Streeter points out that there is no extant life of any Jewish prophet or rabbi.[7] The Greeks and Romans, on the contrary, were greatly interested in biography, indeed, in this very period the writings of such biographers as Plutarch, Suetonius, and Tacitus were produced. Mark's gospel was brought out not in Palestine but at Rome, under Roman influences.

The first life of Jesus was written by John Mark, the son of Mary, a lady of note in Jerusalem. He may have witnessed some of the scenes of Jesus' life, for he seems to refer to himself in Mark 14:51, 52, but according to tradition he received his material from the lips of Peter. Papias, an early bishop, quotes an earlier man, "The Elder," on this question as follows: "And the elder said this also: Mark having become the interpreter of Peter wrote down everything he remembered, without, however, recording in order what was either said or done by Christ." Papias then continues in words which may be his own:

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[6] Dryden has this in mind in "The Hind and the Panther," Part ii:

"He could have writ himself but well foresaw
The event would be like that of Moses' law;
No written laws can be so plain so pure,
But wit may gloss and malice may obscure."

[7] Canon B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, p. 496.

> For neither did he hear the Lord nor did he follow him; but afterwards, as I said, (attended) Peter who adapted his instruction to the needs (of his hearers), but had no design of giving an account of the Lord's oracles. So then Mark made no mistake while he thus wrote some things as he remembered them, for he made it his one care not to omit anything that he heard or to set down any false statement therein.[8]

Irenæus in discussing Peter and Paul finds occasion to comment: "After their decease, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, also transmitted to us in writing those things which Peter had preached; and Luke, the attendant of Paul, recorded in a book the gospel which Paul had declared."[9]

The question of the origin of the gospels of Matthew and Luke is part of a larger subject, the Synoptic Problem, into the details of which we cannot enter here. We shall attempt only a brief summary of the most probable solutions. Mark was written first and then served as a source for Matthew and Luke, but the nature and exact extent of their use of Mark is still a debated question. Burkitt says, "Matthew is a fresh edition of Mark, revised, rearranged, and enriched with new material. . . . Luke is a new historical work made by combining parts of Mark with parts of other documents."[10] With this view Streeter substantially agrees. The tendency of recent criticism has been toward the view that Matthew and Luke had more sources than it was formerly supposed. Streeter[11] holds to what he calls the "Four-Document Hypothesis." The first source is Mark, whose chronology and arrangement Matthew and Luke substantially followed, using the material common to the three gospels. A second source which both used was a group of sayings called Q (from the German *Quelle*, meaning *source*). Q, which may have been compiled by the apostle Matthew, consists of sayings common to Matthew and Luke but not found in Mark. A third source, sometimes designated "M," consists of the material used by and found in Matthew alone. The fourth source is "L," a source accessible only to Luke, consisting of portions of Luke not found in either Matthew or Mark, notably Luke 6:20-8:3 and the longer passage 9:51-18:14, the latter containing some of Luke's most valuable memorabilia. If something similar to this took place, which is likely, the gospels are the depositories of an extended accumulation of the sayings and doings of Jesus. Most of the separate sources have been lost but their main contents have been saved. Although we cannot with certainty date the gospels we shall not go far wrong if we place Mark before 70 A.D., Matthew between 75 and 80, and Luke between 80 and 85 A.D.

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[8] Quoted by Eusebius, *Church History,* iii, 39.

[9] Irenæus, *Adv. Haer. iii,* 1, 1.

[10] F. C. Burkitt, *Earliest Sources for the Life of Christ,* p. 102.

[11] B. F. Streeter, *The Four Gospels,* Chap. 9. See also Sir John Hawkins, "Three Limitations of St. Luke's Use of St. Mark's Gospel," in *Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem.*

These "lives" differ in style and character. Mark is the shortest and most vigorous, hardly more than a mere pamphlet. It bears the marks of an oral rather than a written source and is probably a well memorized record of Peter's impromptu speeches. Its Greek style is poor compared with other books of the New Testament, lacking the finish of Matthew and the flowing ease of Luke.

Matthew has been called "the most important book in the world." Even though a longer work it is more succinct than Mark and very carefully written. Its place of origin was in the East, probably in Antioch, after the fall of Jerusalem. Matthew had some time previously been won over to Paul's side of the current controversy between converted and old-line Jews, and wrote his book to prove to his unconverted compatriots that Jesus was the true Messiah. He quotes the Old Testament, which was their chief authority, forty times and uses the expression "Kingdom of Heaven," so familiar to them, thirty-seven times. His whole gospel centers upon the Kingdom idea and its fulfillment in Jesus. Matthew also collects the sayings of Jesus into groups or sermons. There are five distinct instances: (1) The Sermon on the Mount, chaps. 5-7; (2) Instructions to the Apostles, chap. 10; (3) The Parables, chap. 13; (4) Rules for the New Society, chap. 18; (5) The Discourse on Last Things, chaps. 24-25.

Luke, the only writer of the New Testament who was not a Jew, was a cultured physician versed in the classics. He has captured the imagination of the Christian world. Tradition has it that he himself was an artist. Be that as it may, Luke, as Plummer says, "has had a great influence upon Christian art, of which in a real sense he may be called the founder."[12]

Luke's gospel is usually spoken of as Pauline. While this is correct we must not think of him merely as an echo of even so great an apostle as Paul. Eusebius, the early church historian, says, "Luke delivered certain of those things that he had received from his intimacy with Paul." His gospel shows that he was very sympathetic, especially toward the sick and the poor, and greatly interested in the healing and saving aspects of Jesus' work. With the instinct of a true historian he took a world view of the gospel in his attempt to "trace the course of all things accurately." He is the Bible's most inimitable short story writer. While these stories originally fell from the lips of Jesus, Luke put them into the form in which they have been preserved. Perhaps he did more than merely copy them. Our debt to him stands out as we recall the titles of the stories which we owe to him alone: The Good Samaritan, the Rich Fool, The Sower, The Two Debtors, The Friend at Midnight, The Prodigal Son, The Pharisee and the Publican, as well as others.

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[12] Give honor unto Luke the evangelist,
For he it was the ancients say,
Who first taught Art to fold his hands and pray.
—ROSETTI.

An inscription in the catacombs speaks of a crude painting of the Virgin as "one of the seven painted by Luca."

For Study and Comparison

Compare these lives of Jesus with other ancient biographies such as those in the *Lives* of Plutarch, in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* and others. The method of the gospels in recording Jesus' conversations is followed largely in Boswell's *Life of Johnson.*

4. Historical Writings

The Reign and Achievements of Solomon, I Kings, chaps. 3-11

Division of the Kingdom and Reign of Jeroboam, I Kings, chaps. 14-19a

The above two selections contain some of the best historical writing in the books of Kings. They embrace many types of history material, such as annals, court records, speeches, foreign correspondence and treaties, and they also contain a description of contemporary economic conditions and the workings of the machinery of the Hebrew empire. The drift of things in Solomon's reign and the effects entailed in the following period are sketched in ways that show sound insight into historical causes and results. They constitute a good sample of genetic historical writing.

Jehoida's coup d'état in anointing Joash, II Kings, chaps. 11-12

This is a fine example of good narration. Compare Racine's drama, *Athaliah,* which depicts the same incident in a dramatically suggestive way.

The Siege of Sennacherib, 701 B.C., II Kings 18:13-19:17

Isaiah's Account of the Same Siege, Isaiah 36:1-37:38

Sennacherib's Account of the Same Campaign, Barton, "Archæology of the Bible," pp. 372-373

Herodotus' Account of the Same War, Book II, 141

These four versions of the same situation supply material for a fine comparative study of contemporary Old Testament and non-biblical history. The student should construct from all four a full composite account of the event.

History of the Maccabean Kingdom, I Maccabees

1. The Cause of the Maccabean War, I Maccabees, chaps. 1-2.
2. The Wars of Judas Maccabæus, I Maccabees 3:1-9:23.
3. The Reign of Jonathan, I Maccabees 9:23-13:30.
4. Jewish Independence; Simon's Reign, I Maccabees 13:31-16:24.

The Book of Acts

Acts is a second volume in which Luke continues the account of Christian beginnings which he started in his gospel. The book comes to a close suddenly in a narrative left unfinished. This has led scholars to think that Luke wrote a third volume which has been lost, or that he intended to do so. His purpose seems to have been to write a complete history of the Gentile Mission of Christianity which should be an answer in full to the criticisms of the Roman world. He would explain to the honest inquirer the transition from Jewish to Gentile Christianity and the course of expansion in concentric circles from the narrow Jerusalem community to the adoption of a world-wide program. The book divides naturally into two parts: The Early Church, chaps 1-12; The Mission of Paul, chaps. 13-28. Luke may have made use of written sources for the first part; some think an Aramaic document. One written source is clearly traceable in the "We" sections of Part II, namely 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; and 27:1-28:16. These "We" sections occur at points in the narrative where Luke might have been in the company of Paul, hence the inference has been advanced that they are from his diary. Luke may also have had other written source material at his command in the second part.

This book places Luke in the first rank of historical writers. His dedication to Theophilus, presumably a cultured and wealthy patron, his introduction, plan, arrangement of material, and spirit of inquiry are very similar to those used in Greek and Roman historical works of the period. The insertion of speeches composed by the writer to fit the occasion was accepted as legitimate by Greek historians. His use of geographical and political terms is unusually accurate. Chapter 28 has been called the best description of a sea voyage that has come down to us from antiquity. Ernest Renan has referred to Acts as "a new Homer" because of its epic qualities both in conception and literary style. It contains passages of rare beauty and displays a calm and ironic spirit throughout.

Discussion Topics and Exercises

1. Outline a life of Christ based on the three "Lives."
2. Make your own estimate of the historical readings cited, basing your criticism on the following points:
    - (*a*) Use of source material.
    - (*b*) Chronological and geographical accuracy.
    - (*c*) Literary style and quality.
    - (*d*) Portrayal of character.
    - (*e*) Bias manifested.
3. Compile a list of the best passages of historical writing in Acts.

Books to Consult

Biography and History

Abbott, Lyman, *The Life and Literature of the Ancient Hebrews*, Chap. 2.

Acton, Lord, *Lectures on Modern History,* "The Study of History."

Bewer, J. A., *The Literature of the Old Testament,* Chap. 3.

Foakes-Jackson and Lake, *Beginnings of Christianity,* Part. I, Vol. II, "Greek and Jewish Traditions of Writing History," pp. 7-29.

Fowler, H. T., *A History of the Literature of Ancient Israel,* Chap. 4.

Lee, Sidney, *Principles of Biography.*

Moffatt, James, *The Approach to the New Testament,*

——, Chap. 5, "The Historical Method at Work."

——, Chap. 6, "The Task of the Historical Method."

——, Chap. 7, "Some Objections to the Historical Method."

——, Chap. 8, "The Limitations of the Historical Method."

Thayer, W. R., *The Art of Biography.*

Woodberry, Geo. P., "The Language of all the World," reprinted in *Points of View for College Students,* pp. 132-150.

Old Testament Readings

Abbott, Lyman, *Op. cit.,* Chap. 3.

Bewer, J. A., *Op. cit.,* Chaps. 3, 4, 9, 15, 17, 18.

Fowler, H. T., *Op. cit.,* Chaps. 5, 6, 7.

Kent, C. F., *The Student's Old Testament,* Vol. II.

Wood and Grant, *The Bible as Literature,* Chaps. 16, 17, 18.

The Life of Jesus

The student is referred to any good, current life of Jesus: Bosworth, Burton and Mathews, Farrar, Gilbert, Case, Klausner, Robinson, etc.

The Book of Acts

Cadbury, H. J., *The Making of Luke-Acts.*

Foakes-Jackson and Lake, *op. cit.,* Part I, Vol. II., "The Internal Evidence of Acts," pp. 121-206.

Jülicher, Adolf, *An Introduction to the New Testament,* Part I, Book 3.

Harnack, Adolf, *The Acts of the Apostles; Luke the Physician.*

Moffatt, James, *The Historical New Testament,* pp. 412-420.

Peake, Arthur S., *A Critical Introduction to the New Testament,* Chap. 13.

CHAPTER VII

HEBREW POETRY

1. INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITIONS

POETRY and religion get on well together. In those moments of religious experience when the human soul is in closest harmony with God the utterances of its spokesmen, the seers and prophets, turn rhythmic and burst into song. They find prose inadequate to express the inspiration and joy which they then feel. This is because the living spring of both poetry and religion is strongly emotional. So universal is susceptibility to religious exaltation felt to be that man has been called a "praying animal." And, as Carlyle fancied, a vein of poetry may exist in the hearts of all men. The Hebrews were a people of deep and passionate feeling. They loved intensely and hated bitterly. These inward springs of emotion found an outlet in love of their country and devotion to their God. It is quite natural then that much of the literature of the Hebrews should be poetic in form, and that even the prose of the prophets should be distinguishable for its rhythmic cadences and its elevated diction.

The King James Version of the Bible, although unsurpassed in the dignity and beauty of its English, did not distinguish prose from poetry typographically. Our modern versions, thanks to the painstaking work of a host of scholars and the aid of modern printing practice, make plain to the eye, as well as to the ear, the passages of poetry in the biblical writings. At the time of the King James translation the fundamental principles of Hebrew poetic structure were unknown, so that there were no available means of recognition by which the translators could be guided. There has been noteworthy advance in biblical study since their day in at least three fields: first, that of textual criticism, which by a comparison of all the manuscripts extant has produced a text much nearer to the original; secondly, the historical criticism which has recreated the historical and social background of a writer's period which is so essential to an understanding of his work; and finally, literary criticism, which among its other achievements has discovered the basic principles of Hebrew poetry that bring out clearly its rhythmic beauty.

Our most cherished Hebrew literature is poetic and the poets and seers were after all the most worthy representatives of the Hebrew people. Wordsworth says that "poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." It is the "emotion of life made audible." Although there may be a vein of poetry in every human soul, as Carlyle fancies, we are hardly prepared to admit that feeling alone can make a poet, else every rhyming effusion would be dignified with the title of poetry. Professor Alden has better defined poetry "as the art of representing human experiences, in so far as they are of lasting and universal interest, in metrical language usually with chief reference to the emotions and by means of the imagination."[1] Let us look a bit more closely at some of the elements combined in this definition.

Human experiences to be of value for the uses of poetry must be of lasting and universal interest. When prosaic folks look upon the portrait of a lady their principal interest might be the facts of her life but the interest of artists is in the beauty or feeling or ideal which has become fixed on the canvas. When Browning writes, "Beautiful Evelyn Hope is dead," we do not take his words as an item of news. That poem will awaken sadness in men as long as the English language is spoken. A writer may have an abundance of emotion but unless he presents aspects of experience possessed of permanent significance he has only relieved his own feelings. Every one, willy-nilly, is expressing his personality somewhat in all that he does; it becomes art only if it be significant enough to be of lasting interest.

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[1] R. M. Alden, *Introduction to Poetry*, p. 1.

The Hebrew prophets and poets were poetic because they coupled ethical ideals with a consciousness of God and derived from the combination lasting human and social values. In a unique way they fused religion and patriotism, which are the two strongest social expressions of life. It was in this union that the passion and fervor of the Hebrew poets found appropriate outlet. Herein may lie the reason for the difference in strength of appeal between much modern religious poetry and the lyric poetry of the Bible. Most of the religious poetry of England as well as that of the Continent is thin, oversentimental, lacking in deep reality, and ofttimes mere poetic rubbish. The Hebrew poetry has solid content, depth of reality, a calmness and poise which is often conspicuously absent in other religious lyrics. Mr. Newbolt says:

> This union of the fervor of patriotism with the fervor of moral aspiration produced a poetry which is to all our English liturgical poetry as a great and sonorous bell is to the vague whistle of the wind. It rings to the heights of heaven but it was cast in the bowels of the earth. Therefore it has in all generations moved men as no other poetry has ever moved them. Before our society can hope to produce such poetry as this, we must learn to clear our vision and see, as we hardly see at present, what is the true nature of the religious ideal and how it is related to our common life.[2]

[2] William Newbolt, *A New Study of English Poetry.*

Poetry is an art, not a science, and therefore is to be judged by the canons of art alone. Newbolt distinguishes between the respective functions of poetry and science in this way: "To attempt to see things as they are in themselves is the splendid forlorn hope of science; it is not the work of poetry. The business of poetry is to see spirits as they are in the life of the spirit."[3] We do not seek to discredit science nor to underestimate its value but we must insist that its criteria shall not be applied outside its sphere. Beauty may not be subjected to nor religious truth demonstrated by logic. Some people seek to define their religion in an exact creed; others voice it in a poem instinct with the presence of God and reminiscent of the realm that lies beyond appearances. Much that has been said about the mistakes of the Bible is beside the point; the alleged mistakes have to do with matters that do not fall within the Bible's province, which is the ultimate significance of human experiences.

Aristotle thought that the essence of poetry was *imitativeness* of nature; Bacon held that its central characteristic was *creativeness.* The Greek word *poietes* means maker, creator, terms which imply imagination, reflection, and creative skill. By imitativeness, therefore, Aristotle did not mean a servile copying of nature. He says in the *Poetics*[4] that the artist should "imitate things as they ought to be; he may place before himself an unrealized ideal." In taking over the term *imitation* from Plato, Aristotle enriched its content by giving the poet a larger measure of creative freedom and by conferring upon him jurisdiction over human life in all its phases, including its unrealized dreams. The artist does not reproduce nature as does the camera but displays upon the canvas a picture of his own composed of nature's materials. The poet exercises the same daring freedom, creating beauty by adding something of his own to his work.

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[3] William Newbolt, *A New Study of English Poetry.*

[4] Aristotle, *Poetics,* Chap. 25.

Poetry in common with all art must have a medium to work in. Sculpture and painting give permanent expression to beauty in forms of *space,* which make their appeal to the eye; poetry and music do the same thing in forms of *time,* making their appeal to the ear. The media of the one are form and color, of the other words and sound. In the *time* forms music is the more intensive art, for it deals with one media alone and depends on pure sentiment. Poetry has a wider representation than music, because it uses both words and sound. Hence, whereas music may convey the deeper and purer emotion it has not the variety of scope which is possible to poetry. Poetry is the universal art, for its domain is as wide as the thoughts and feelings of man. When words are linked to music in perfect harmony there results a combination of variety and depth which offers full expression to beauty and feeling. In the worship of the Second Temple the Hebrews united their great religious poems to worthy tunes, and these later became the most distinctive element in the liturgy of the Christian church. It is nothing less than amazing what a spell choice lines and phrases from the Old Testament prophets and psalms cast over the human soul when set to such music as Handel's *Messiah* and the oratorios and chants of the church.

The final subject to be discussed is the nature and office of metrical sound. There is a good deal of confusion on this point to-day because one group of poets has broken away from the metrical tradition and begun to write "free verse" and produce "impressionistic" poetry. This reaction from a too fixed tradition as to form may finally justify itself, but few will deny that much of its product thus far is vulgar and superficial. There is, of course, good, older authority in support of the view that meter is not necessary for good poetry. Sidney and Shelley, writers of the two great "Defenses" of poetry in our language, take that position. But Shelley adds that "the language of poets has ever affected a certain uniform and harmonious recurrence of sounds without which it were not poetry, and which is scarcely less indispensable to the communication of its influence than the words themselves." [5]

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF HEBREW POETRY

As George Adam Smith has pointed out, Hebrew poetry comes close home to those of us who saw through its open windows our earliest visions of time, of eternity, of truth, and of God. "Its rhythms haunt our noblest prose; its lyrics are our most virile and enduring poems." [6] But in another sense it is more or less inaccessible, for it is the product of an alien race and a very different culture. Compare the poetry of the European peoples of Aryan descent. They are our kinsmen and we are fairly well acquainted with their literature, their modes of thought, their political ideals and social customs. In the case of the Hebrews we are dealing with a people whose very alphabet is different, lacking in some of the sounds which seem to us most musical and abounding in gutturals which impress us at first as anything but poetic. But different as their spoken language and forms of thought may be they were possessed of a vivid imagination, a creative ability, a depth of emotion, a keen sense of lyric movement, and a communal life congenial to the poetic faculty. The Aryan word for poet signifies the *maker*, but in Semitic languages he is the *seer*, the man of vision, the singer, the shepherd of words, the comparer, the bewailer, anything but the *maker*. The Hebrews did not think of the poet as the maker or creator but as the one who sees through the visible into the invisible.

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[5] Shelley, *Defense of Poetry,* quoted from Alden, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

[6] G. A. Smith, *The Early Poetry of Israel,* p. x.

The Hebrews did not develop the technique of either the epic or the drama. Many of their short ballads and war songs contain fine epic material, but they never made it into the larger whole. The stories of the patriarchs might well have been knit together into a national epic had a Homer or a Vergil undertaken the task. Much the same thing is true of the drama. The Hebrews were naturally dramatic, delighting in dance, pantomime and mimic song; their prophets made use of such dramatic means as the symbol, the monologue, the vision, and the dialogue; but for reasons which will be given later they did not, as did the Greeks, develop a true drama.

The poetical genius of the Hebrews was lyrical, and in this field they were unsurpassed. The primary reference of the word *lyric* is to a single singer and his poem or song. But its use has been extended to include all poetry expressive subjectively of the emotions either of the poet or his group. In this more inclusive sense the bulk of the maturer poetry of all peoples falls within this classification. Whereas epic is the narration in the grand manner of events, and drama the presentation of character in specific personages, in the lyric the artist expresses the emotions resulting from his own absorption in the experiences of the group. The lyric does not appeal primarily to the senses. In it the light of the poet's imagination is bringing the universal and lasting experiences of men to a focus. May it not be possible that the very reason the Hebrews did not develop the drama is to be found in that propensity for the subjective which made them the great lyricists of religion, thus giving voice to the sublime spiritual experiences of their race. What grips us in the psalms is the universality of the aspirations and hopes expressed in them. "The Lord is *my* shepherd" must be parsed as in the singular number and the present tense, but it is expressive of an attitude of trust which is theirs for the taking by all men. Let any of us pore over the confession of sin in Psalm fifty-one in a conscience-stricken moment and we feel that it is our sin, too, over which the singer of Israel is weeping vicariously. These personal songs have as nation-wide a meaning and appeal as have prophetic utterances, such as Isaiah 1:16-18. Indeed, the prophets used the personal dirge to express national grief over the death or decay of the kingdom.

The greatest danger of lyric poetry is the risk which it runs of being preoccupied with the petty. This is especially true of the religious lyric, as the unwholesome sentimentalism of most mystic effusions demonstrates. In these there is a weak copying of the form while all weighty significance is lacking. But Hebrew lyric poetry never falls into this pit. The poets mount as on eagles' wings to a vantage point in the empyrean. The love of God and the sin of man confront one another; while there is room for joy the things of sorrow are not forgotten; the contrasts and realities of life are held in clear perspective. At the same time the Hebrew singers rise to that joy of which Dr. Van Dyke speaks: "The true mission of poetry is to increase joy . . . there is no perfect joy without love. Therefore love poetry is the best. But the highest of all love poetry is that which celebrates with the psalms

That Love which is and was
My Father and my Brother and my God.[7]

Hebrew poetry is characterized by a keen observation, and intimate love, of nature. It is nobly responsive to nature, which it approaches as the handiwork of God and is thus safeguarded from falling into animism or pantheism. To the Hebrew poets nature was God's theater of action and its forces messengers to do His bidding. The clouds were His chariots, flames of fire His ministers, and the winds His couriers. In His praise the mountains skipped for joy like rams, the hills broke forth into singing, the trees of the field clapped their hands, and the morning stars sang together. They never thought of nature as "red in tooth and claw," "shrieking against faith in a living God," but rather as calling to man to worship and praise. The poems glisten and sparkle with metaphors and similes which strive to catch and hold the beauty of God's world. This species of intimacy with Nature permeates their literature to an extent almost equal with their love of country. None should be so unwise as to apply modern scientific criteria to these poetic expressions about a beautiful and interesting world.

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[7] Henry Van Dyke, *The Poetry of the Psalms,* p. 25.

Much of Hebrew poetry is pervaded by a sense of national tragedy hovering on the horizon of the more or less immediate future. Along with this is the vision of a way of escape and a strain of hope that the nation will take advantage of it. The personal tragedy at the heart of the book of Hosea becomes a symbol of a whole cycle of national tragedies. So closely are the two sources of sorrow interwoven that at times one can hardly tell whether Hosea is speaking of his love for his wife or of Yahweh's love for Israel. Has any man ever more fully identified his own sorrow with that of God over his people's faithlessness? Here is a state of mind and heart which is itself poetic, for it can see the small point of a personal tragedy writ large in the heavens. But Israel's sorrows begat hope and not despair in her poets, who have given us whole groups of songs which deal with an age when God shall receive the homage due Him and Israel shall be at peace with Him. These "Songs of Hope" will form the content of a separate chapter.

3. The Structure of Hebrew Poetry

In the days when the King James Bible was first printed the secret of the structure of Hebrew poetry had not been discovered. It was not until 1753 that Bishop Lowth[8] made the discovery that parallelism was the fundamental characteristic of Hebrew poetry. By parallelism is meant the correspondence in sense between two or more units of expression which serve either by confirmation, contrast, or amplification to emphasize their common subject matter. This means that the rhythm we should seek as we read the Hebrew lines is to be found in the balance of the thought rather than in the beat of the syllables. There is apt to be a certain proportionate length to the member units of expression, but the real pendulum-like swing is in the balancing of the thought. Four general kinds of parallelism may be distinguished:

1. Synonymous Parallelism, in which the second member repeats the thought of the first with slight variations only:

> Yahweh of Hosts is with us,
> The God of Jacob is our refuge. (Psalm 46:7).
>
> What is man that Thou art mindful of him?
> And the Son of Man that Thou visitest him? (Psalm 8:4).

2. Antithetic Parallelism, in which the thought of the second member employs the principle of contrast to emphasize the first:

> Yahweh knoweth the way of the righteous,
> But the way of the wicked shall perish. (Psalm 1:6).

3. Synthetic Parallelism, in which the second member either carries the thought a step farther or completes it:[9]

> Yet have I set my King
> On Zion, my holy hill. (Psalm 2:6).
>
> As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks
> So panteth my soul after thee, O God. (Psalm 42:1).

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[8] Bishop Lowth, *De Sacra Pœsis Hebræorum,* English translation by Gregory, London, 1847. For Jewish anticipations of Lowth's analysis see G. B. Gray, *The Forms of Hebrew Poetry,* pp. 17 f.

[9] Some writers question whether *Synthetic* is true parallelism. See G. B. Gray, *The Forms of Hebrew Poetry,* pp. 49 ff.

4. Climactic or Stair-like Parallelism, where the second member takes over the thought with which the first starts and carries it to its goal. This may be extended to include three or more member units:

I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains:
From whence shall my *help* come?
My *help* cometh from Yahweh
Who made heaven and earth.
He will not suffer thy foot to be moved,
He that *keepeth* thee will not slumber.
Behold He that *keepeth* Israel
Will neither slumber nor sleep. (Psalm 121:1-4).

The most common forms of parallelism are the two-member or distich and the three-member or tristich. The following sextet is exceptional but shows the possibilities in the way of cumulative effect:

The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul:
The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple:
The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart:
The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes:
The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever:
The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.
(Psalm 19:7-9).

Parallelism was formerly regarded as a form peculiar to Hebrew poetry. Now we know that among Eastern peoples it is in all but universal use. It is a very natural borrowing from the dialogue mode characteristic of primitive folk-song. It rests on profound and universal psychological principles: deep calling to deep, tree to tree, bird to bird, life to life, and thought to thought. The heart of the poet is full of such natural antiphons. In fact, primitive poetry is the art of saying the same thing over and over again in charming ways.

Professor Newman[10] has shown that parallelism has passed through three stages of growth: iteration, incremental repetition, and matured parallelism. Iteration was its most primitive form of emotional expression, saying exactly the same thing over and over. In incremental repetition some one of the most daring singers moved by inner impulse ventures to improvise a new unit, which is then repeated over and over if it meets with the approval of the company, thus adding variety and fresh movement to the main thought. The end of this process is the matured parallelism.

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[10] Louis I. Newman, *Parallelism in Amos,* University of California Publications.

Finnish epic poetry is rich in parallel couplets. Longfellow took the meter and parallelism of Hiawatha from the Finnish epic *Kalevala*. Examples of Finnish couplets are:

"Sea-foam" did thy brother call thee,
And thy mother called thee "Sunshine."

Nature was my only teacher,
Words and water my instructors.

Any number of similar parallelisms may be found in Hiawatha.

There are striking similarities in Chinese literature to the use of parallelism in Hebrew. We have here both the parallelism of thought and in addition a parallelism of tone and grammar which is unique:

The white stone, unfractured, ranks as most precious,
The blue lily, unblemished, emits sweet fragrance.

The antithetic couplet is common in Chinese proverbs:

Unsullied poverty is always happy,
Impure wealth brings many sorrows.

The following couplet which comes from ancient Egypt almost reminds one of some of the Hebrew ascriptions of praise to Yahweh:

Lord of Power, he seizeth the sceptre,
Lord of Protection who holdeth the scourge.

Parallelism abounded in Babylonian literature, and while not present largely in classic Arabic it does occur frequently in modern Arabic and in Palestinian love songs. One example will suffice:[11]

Go now, my brother and go,
Go to the region of Haleb,
Thou, the tattooed on the arms,
Who forgest the necklace of gold!

Go now, my brother and go,
Go to the region of Musr,
Thou, the tattooed on the arms,
Who forgest the necklace of coins.

Parallelism occurs in English poems, especially of the ballad type, but we must remember that it is not, as in Hebrew, the dominant principle:[12]

Old King Cole was a merry old soul,
And a merry old soul was he.

Lock the door, Lariston, Lion of Liddlesdale:
Lock the door, Lariston, Lowther comes on.
—HOGG.

These examples show how deep-seated is man's instinctive liking for the return swing of the pendulum in saying the same thing over. As George Adam Smith says, "The fact is primitive poetry was the art of saying the same beautiful things over and over again in similarly charming ways, which rimed and sang back to each other, not in sound only but in sense as well."[13] The parallel members act like two singing choruses that come forward dancing to meet each other. The member units, as Herder puts it, "sustain, uplift, and strengthen each other in their counsel or their joy. . . . In didactic odes the one line strengthens the other. It is as though the father spoke to his son and the mother repeated the words. The counsel thus becomes so very true, cordial, and intimate. In love songs again we have sweet lover's talk—a real interchange of hearts and thoughts." [14]

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[11] For other examples see Gustaf Dalman, *Palastinischer Diwan,* pp. 6, 7. See also Newman, *op. cit.*

[12] G. A. Smith, *The Early Poetry of Israel,* p. 14, gives copious examples of English parallelism.

[13] *Ibid.,* p. 16.

In Hebrew poetry parallelism is the dominant form in which the rhythmical principle is embodied. We noticed in the examples given a certain verbal rhythm as well as a rhythm in the sense. Rhythm is the primary characteristic of all regular movements in time—music, the dance, and poetry. It is "the harmonious repetition of fixed sound relations." The two essential elements in rhythm are equal time intervals and the stresses which mark them off. As soon as the ear catches a succession of sounds so divided it begins to work out the measure of the rhythm and the regularity of the stresses. We unconsciously divide the strokes of a clock into a "tick" and a "tock" by accenting the one more than the other. When words as the definite symbols of ideas are related so as to produce the effect of repetitional regularity and accent we have rhythm.

There have been two general theories of rhythm: the classical, in which the flow of the sound was divided into feet measured by variations in the length of the syllables, and the modern, illustrated in some German and English poetry in which the flow of sound divides into a regular succession of accented and unaccented syllables. In this latter poetry a line consists of a series of syllables constituting an ordered succession of accents or beats. After a century of research and debate it is now quite generally agreed among students of Hebrew poetry that it is accent or stress and not the quantity of the syllables which is the governing factor in Hebrew meter.[15]

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[14] Herder, *Geist der hebraischen Poesie,* Sutphan's edition, p. 237.

[15] G. A. Smith, *The Early Poetry of Israel,* p. 11. The student will find a most valuable discussion in W. H. Cobb's *A Criticism of Systems of Hebrew Metre* (Oxford, 1905).

Two features of Hebrew rhythm must be discussed here. The first is that a member unit of a parallelism is measured not by the number of its syllables but by the number of its accents. The number of unaccented syllables to each accented one is variable; there may be two, or three, or occasionally four. Two units may have the same number of feet but a widely variable number of syllables, because the one may have more unaccented syllables to each accented one. The closest analogy in English to Hebrew poetry, perhaps, is the old Anglo-Saxon poetry of which *Piers Plowman* is a specimen. On this point Professor Saintsbury says, "But we see on some pages an extraordinary *difference* in the lengths of the lines or in other words of the number of . . . unaccented syllables which are allowed to group themselves around the pivots or posts of the rhythm."[16] The pivots or posts are the accented syllables. This description of English poetry, *mutatis mutandis,* exactly fits Hebrew poetry. Everything depends upon the accented syllable. The Hebrew poet leaps, as it were, from one stepping-stone of accent to another with great ease.

The second feature deserving notice is the fact that different rhythmical movements are found in the same poem. There are poems in which the member units have two, three, or four accents, sometimes in an ordered system and then again without. The Lord's Prayer, according to one Hebrew text, has three member units of two accents, then two of three, next three of two each, then two of three each, and closes with two of two each. The effect is beautiful by reason both of the rhythm and the parallelism. In fact, parallelism in Hebrew poetry per-forms the same function as rhyme in English poetry, which is to define the rhythmical periods, but parallelism is much more closely related to the thought than is rhyme. Herein lies the secret of the richness which so adorns Hebrew poetry. This harmony in both sound and thought produces the most pleasing effect possible.

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[16] G. Saintsbury, *A History of English Prosody,* i, pp. 13 f. The best example in later English literature of rhythm resting upon equality in the number of accented syllables accompanied by great inequality in the total number of syllables is Coleridge's "Christabel." The accented syllables in the line are always four; the unaccented vary as Coleridge himself said from seven to eleven, and in the third line of the poem drop down to four.

The most frequent rhythmical division is the 3-3 couplet,[17] with the 4-4 and the 2-2 close seconds. Many couplets are in 3-2, 2-3, and 4-2 form. The tristich occurs in 3-3-3, 3-3-2, 3-2-2, and other combinations. There are no stanzas; the most usual divisions are couplets and tristiches.

The following translation of Amos 3:12 is a good example of the 2-2 measure, which he calls "a mocking or light dance meter": [18]

As a she′pherd sa′ves
Out of a li′on's ja′ws
Two bi′ts of a bo′ne
Or a ra′g of an e′ar
So′ shall be sa′ved
The Is′raeli′tes,
Tho′se who are si′tting there
In Sama′ri′a
In the co′rner of the co′uch
On the cu′shion of the diva′n.

Hebrew parallelism divides the couplets into two broad types of rhythm: in the one the two members of the parallel balance each other equally, whereas in the other the second member is shorter than the first and is in a sense an echo of it. The discovery of this fact was one of the most important advances in the knowledge of the structure of Hebrew poetry. A special name has been given to the second of these forms, viz., the *kinah*, or elegiac measure, so-called because of its prevalence in the book of Lamentations (*Kinoth*). The members come in 3-2 measure, the first always the longer, with the transitions indicated by a stop. The first member is recited with a rising and the second with a falling cadence. The second also seems to be an echo of the first. Professor Gray has suggested the terms *balancing rhythm* and *echoing rhythm* for these two, thinking the latter a better and more descriptive term than *kinah* and supplying "balancing" as the companion term required for the ordinary rhythm of the equal parallel lines.[19] The *kinah* or echoing rhythm is illustrated in David's dirge:

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[17] These numerical devices are convenient symbols to give the number of accents in parallel lines. The digits give the accents per line and the number of digits the number of lines.

[18] English translation of Bernard Duhm, *The Twelve Prophets*, p. 62.

> Thy love to me more marvelous
>   Than woman's love! (II Samuel 1:26).

Amos uses the measure in 5:2:

> She is fallen, to rise no more,
>   The virgin of Israel.

Examples from Lamentations are:

> From heaven to earth hath he hurled
>   The pomp of Israel. (2:1).
>
> Their skin drawn tight on their bones,
>   Dry as a stick. (4:8).

Professor Budde, to whom we owe the discovery of the *kinah* measure, maintains that it was the favorite verse used by the women as mourners for the dead.[20] It was also chosen by the prophets for their songs of derision in the case of those nations whose doom they predicted. Ezekiel frequently mentions the *kinah* and uses it in his lament over the deportation of the two princes.[21]

The Hebrew balance or rhythm type of structure and thought combined is not confined to the parallel members but often governs the arrangement of the poem as a whole. Moulton[22] discusses this at length in what he calls "The Higher Parallelism of Interpretation." The basic form of this rhythmic balance is the strophe and antistrophe. The word *strophe* is from the Greek and means "a turning." In the performance of the Greek ode the chorus marched to the right of the altar as they sang one unit or stanza, then they turned and marched back as they sang the answering stanza. Similarly on the next two stanzas they would march again to the left and return. These evolutions would indicate the balance existing between the first and second, also the third and fourth stanzas, and the larger unity between the first and second two. The name *strophe* applies to the first stanza and *antistrophe* to the answering one. In time the effect of this strophic structure was brought out by antiphonal singing instead of marching.

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[19] George B. Gray, *The Forms of Hebrew Poetry,* p. 131.

[20] K. Budde, Hasting's *Dictionary of the Bible,* article "Poetry (Hebrew)."

[21] For example, Ezekiel 2:10; 19:1-14; 26:17; 27:2; 32; and 31:3-8. See also King, *Early Religious Poetry of the Hebrews,* p. 39.

The *strophe* in Hebrew poetry differs in meaning on the one hand from the clearly defined strophe and antistrophe of the classical writers and also from the common English use of the term. In Greek its gait and length were governed by the demands of the music and in English it means a unit or stanza of a certain number of lines of definite length. In Hebrew it is directed to a division of the thought. King says, "That which parallelism is to the ear in the structure of the verse, that the (Hebrew) strophe is to the mind in the arrangement of the whole poem."[23] It may therefore vary greatly in length, for the Hebrew poet was no more bound to absolute regularity in strophic structure than he was in parallelism or rhythm. Not only is this variation shown from poem to poem but frequently the strophes are of different length in the same poem. In some cases they are of the same

[22] R. G. Moulton, *The Literary Study of the Bible,* Book I, Chap. 2.
[23] E. C. King, *Early Religious Poetry of the Hebrews,* p. 103.

length, as, for instance, in Psalm 119, Lamentations 3, and Isaiah 9:8-10:4. Psalm 13 is simple and regular in strophic structure. Verses 1-2 express sorrow; 3-4 a prayer; and 5-6 a joyful triumph. The three strophes make three stanzas of four lines each. Psalm 42 was originally combined with 43, the two being composed of three strophes and the refrain, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" repeated three times. The arrangement is as follows:

Psalm 42:1-4, first strophe; verse 5, the refrain.
" 42:6-9, second strophe; " 10, " "
" 43:1-4, third strophe; " 5, " "

Since reference has been made to the difficulties raised by the variations in the lines and strophes of Hebrew poetry, it is only fair to add that there are some compensating advantages. Bliss Perry says:

> It is not absurd to speak of the natural "size" of poetic thoughts. Pope, for instance, often works with ideas of couplet size, just as Martial often amused himself with ideas of still smaller epigram size, or Omar with thoughts and fancies that came in quatrain sizes. . . . No one who has given attention to the normal length of phrases and sentences doubts that there are natural "breathfuls" of words corresponding to the units of ideas: and when ideas are organized by emotion, there are waves, gusts, or ripples of words, matching the waves of feeling. In the ideal poetic "pattern" these waves of idea, feeling, and rhythmic speech would coincide more or less completely.[24]

The Hebrew poets were certainly free to choose media adapted to the expression of their various thoughts and ideas.

Before leaving the general subject of Hebrew poetry we may mention some other characteristics of its tone-quality. Rhyme is rarely found in biblical Hebrew, although it is conspicuous in the Arabic and in the mediæval Hebrew that was modeled on the Arabic. When it is found in the Bible it is more frequently found in the shorter poems, such as the Song of Lamech in Genesis 4:23 and the chant in Judges 16:24. Occasionally it is found in longer poems, such as the Song of Songs, especially 8:1-3, and even in the prophets, as, for instance, Isaiah 43:1-5.[25] But it is manifestly not an outstanding characteristic of Hebrew poetry and no effort was made to present it.

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[24] Bliss Perry, *A Study of Poetry,* p. 197.

Alliteration occurs infrequently. The passage in Micah 1:10:

Tell it not in Tell-town
In Weep-town weep,

so often cited as an instance of alliteration is really a play on words. We have a line truly alliterative in Genesis 27:27:

See the scent of my son,

and another in the Song of Deborah:

Then thudded the hoofs of the horses.

By means of assonance, or the repetition and stressing of vowel sounds, some of the subtler effects of Hebrew verse are secured. The Hebrew poets were fond of mingling the liquids and softer radicals and of the use of the doubled consonant, which produces effects difficult to register in translation. The Song of Samson is a good case:

With the jawbone of an ass
Have I massed a mass;
With the jawbone of an ass
Have I slain a thousand.

Here is an example of the imitation of one and another kind of noise by the spoken word, called *onomatopœia* in rhetoric:

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[25] Theophile James Meek, "The Structure of Hebrew Poetry," in *The Journal of Religion,* Vol. X, pp. 526 f., gives discussion and translations.

Then thudded the hoofs of the horses,
Off gallopped, off gallopped his chargers.
Curse ye, curse ye Meroz!
Curse ye, curse ye her townsfolk.

A most effective instance of how the spoken word may be made to chime in with the thought is the remarkable little poem at the close of chapter 17 in Isaiah. The prophet is comparing the noisy clamor of the approaching army to the booming and dashing of waves on a rock-bound coast and the ease of its victory to the blowing of the chaff from the hillside threshing-floor by a whirlwind:

Woe, the booming of the peoples, the multitudes!
As the booming of the seas are they booming.
And the crashing of the nations,
As the crashing of mighty waters they crash:
But Yahweh rebuketh him
And he chides him and he fleeth afar,
Like the chaff on the mountains by the wind,
And the whirling dust before the whirlwind.[26]

Byron's famous "Destruction of Sennecherib" lacks the vividness of Isaiah's briefer description, but it is interesting to compare the two.

Words have not only tone-quality but pictorial value in poetry. Every student of poetry pays much attention to its imagery. Professor Bliss Perry thinks that the ability to hit upon happy images constitutes the true distinction of the poet. He says, "The plasticity of the world as it appears to the mind of the poet is clearly evidenced by the swarm of images which present themselves to the poet's consciousness." [27] In this respect the Hebrew language was peculiarly fitted to become the vehicle of poetry. Its rigidity, its lack of precise distinctions of time and verb forms, its weakness in connectives and its general incapacity for abstractions, which prevented its attaining the subtle logical effects of the Greek language, did however enhance its pictorial power. The verb, which is the predominant element in the Hebrew sentence, provides for plenty of movement and action. On this point Herder well says:

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[26] Translation, somewhat modified, is taken from George Adam Smith. See his *The Early Poetry of Israel,* p. 7, for the effects which can be attained in a transliteration of the Hebrew.

[27] Bliss Perry, *A Study of Poetry,* p. 74.

> Since action and delineation are the very essence of poetry, and since the verb is the part of speech which depicts action . . . the language that is rich in expressive pictorial verbs is a poetical language; and the more fully it can convert its nouns into verbs, the more poetical it is. . . . Now in Hebrew the verb is almost everything . . . the language of which we are speaking is a very abyss of verbs, a sea of waves, where action ever rolls and surges into action.[28]

The Song of Deborah contains striking examples of the use of verbs in profusion.

Here are a few suggestive verbs with their derived meanings, cited to show their pictorial quality:

to stretch out the hand—to pray
to stroke one's face—to entreat
to be fat—to be stupid
to harden one's heart—to become stubborn
to be stiffnecked—to be proud
to breathe hard—to be angry
to act the harlot—to forsake Yahweh
to smell—to have pleasure in

4. The Book of Psalms

The book of Psalms is one of the most revealing of all the books of the Bible. Here we can "look into the hearts of all the saints," as Martin Luther said in his Second Preface to the Psalter. The book of Psalms was the "Song Book of the Second Temple." Our word psalm comes from the Greek *psalmos*, the word used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew *mizmor*, which means a song to be used in public worship. Our present book of Psalms was originally divided into five books as follows:

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[28] Johann G. Herder, *Geist der hebraischen Poesie*, 1833, Sutphan's edition, xi, p. 237.

Book I,	Psalms	1-41,	Doxology	41:13
II,	"	42-72,	"	72:18-19
III,	"	73-89,	"	89:52
IV,	"	90-106,	"	106:48
V,	"	107-150,	"	150 entire

Jewish tradition has linked the beginning of psalmody with the name of David. There is a real basis in fact for this tradition but it is impossible to distinguish with any certainty the actual Davidic contributions to the Psalter. The title, "of David," appearing before a psalm is no criterion of authorship but a mere index to the primary collection from which the psalm was taken. In our present book seventy-four psalms bear this title and thirteen of them are connected with some incident in David's life. The Septuagint attributes some others to him, including an added psalm (151). The first Davidic psalter was completed sometime after the restoration of the nation to Palestine in the period of Ezra and Nehemiah. It contained nearly all the psalms of the present Book I. In the course of the next century a second "Davidic" collection was completed, the so-called "Prayers of David," now incorporated in our book as Psalms 51-72.

In the meantime fresh collections of songs were grouped around the names of Asaph and the "Sons of Korah." The only guild of singers in the Temple during the first century after the Restoration (516 B.C.) up to the time of Ezra and Nehemiah was that called the Sons of Korah. In the subsequent period the Korahites were added but they later became porters or doorkeepers and their former function of singers passed to the families of Heman and Ethan. The Korah group contained Psalms 42-49 with an appendix of four Korahite psalms, Nos. 84, 85, 87, and 88. The Asaph psalter contained Psalms 50 and 73-83, the "Prayers of David" falling in between. The rest of the Psalter, for the most part, consists of miscellaneous collections. The most attractive single collection is the fifteen charming lyrics entitled, "Songs of Ascents," Psalms 120-135, which were most probably pilgrim songs sung by bands of Jews on their way to Jerusalem to attend the great annual festivals. In addition there is the Hallel group, Psalms 103, 104, 111-118, sung in connection with the Passover, and a further Hallelujah group, Psalms 146-150. The other psalms bear no group relation to one another. A feature of the Asaph and Korah psalms is the predominance in them of the word Elohim for God, whereas the other psalms use the word Yahweh. Psalms 42-83 use Elohim; Psalms 1-41 and 84-150 use Yahweh. There are a number of duplicates, the most noticeable and well-known pairs being Psalms 14 and 53 and Psalm 40:14-18, a duplicate of Psalm 70.

Some of the musical terms in the psalms may be mentioned here. The word *maskil* (Psalm 32) means a meditative poem, while *miktam* (Psalm 16) means literally a "golden piece," that is, a choice hymn. The word "song" as attached to Psalm 45 means an ode, but *Hallel* is a song of praise. Some of the tunes are named *Jonath elen rehokim* (Psalm 56), which means "The Dove of the Distant Terebinths." Psalm 60 is set to the tune of *Shushan eduth* or "The Lily of Testimony." *Gittith* (Psalm 8) means a harvest song. Other tunes are "The Hind of the Morning" and "The Lilies." These tunes befit the joyous festival spirit and psalms were set to them just as religious hymns are sometimes set to popular tunes to-day. The word *selah* inserted in the midst of a psalm may have marked a break where a doxology or song of praise was to be inserted or a refrain repeated. The word means "to lift up" and refers to lifting up the voice in praise, just as we sing the Gloria or the Amen in worship.

DISCUSSION TOPICS AND EXERCISES

1. Write out a selected group of psalms and indicate the parallelisms and strophic arrangements. Psalms 15, 23, 46 and 121 may be used.
2. Read portions of the book of Lamentations and mark the accented syllables for practice in the use of the Kinah measure.

BOOKS TO CONSULT

General Books on Poetry

ALDEN, R. H., *An Introduction to Poetry,* Chap. 2.
GUMMERE, F. B., *Handbook of Poetics,* Part I, Chap. 2.
MOULTON, R. G., *Literary Study of the Bible,* Book I, Chap. 3.
NEWBOLT, WILLIAM, *A New Study of English Poetry.*
PERRY, BLISS, *A Study of Poetry,* Chaps. 1, 2, 3.

On Hebrew Poetry

COBB, W. H., *A Criticism of Systems of Hebrew Metre.*
FOWLER, H. T., *A History of the Literature of the Ancient Hebrews,* pp. 25-33.
GORDON, A. R., *Poets of the Old Testament,* Chap. 1.
GRAY, GEORGE B., *The Forms of Hebrew Poetry,* Chaps. 2, 4, 5.
KING, E. G., *Early Religious Poetry of the Hebrews,* Introd., Chaps. 3, 6.
MOULTON, R. G., *op. cit.,* Book I, Chaps. 1, 2.
SMITH, GEORGE ADAM, *Early Poetry of Israel.*
——, *Jeremiah,* Chap. on "The Poet."
WILD, LAURA, *Literary Guide to the Bible,* Chap. 5.

A valuable recent contribution to the study of Hebrew poetry is an article by Professor Theophile James Meek, on "The Structure of Hebrew Poetry" in the *Journal of Religion,* Vol. IX, pp. 523-550.

CHAPTER VIII

PATRIOTIC SONGS AND ELEGIES

1. PATRIOTIC SONGS

IN this section we shall review some of those songs which embody the peculiar national consciousness of the Hebrew people, who conceived of themselves as specially chosen of Yahweh. This covenant relationship which their father Abraham was thought to have formally entered into with Yahweh gave to the nation a unique confidence in its destiny and served to draw religion and patriotism into the closest union. It was the guiding ideal of the Hebrews throughout their national history and they were sure that the same attitude had been characteristic of their heroic ancestors. But we must not forget that a true national consciousness did not emerge until the early days of the monarchy; later writers were simply crediting earlier ages with the emotions which they themselves felt so vividly.

Two things must then be borne in mind: first, that most of these songs were not composed until the tribes had become a nation with a full-fledged national consciousness, and secondly, that this national self-consciousness became accentuated and more sharply defined through the contact of the Israelites with other civilized nations. As the songs were handed down from one generation to another, additions and alterations were made to fit the new days and the new modes of the national consciousness. We shall not attempt to date these songs nor to pass upon the critical questions which arise concerning them, but shall give them in their probable chronological order or nearly so. The student is referred to the ampler works on biblical literature for a full discussion of the critical questions involved.

Among the earliest of these poems is a fierce song of hatred against the Canaanites, which is attributed to Noah but probably originated in the tribal days of the Judges:

The Blessing of Noah, Genesis 9:25-27

Cursed be Canaan!
   Meanest slave shall be he to his brothers!

Bless, Yahweh, the tents of Shem,
   and let Canaan be his slave!

God enlarge Japheth,
   and let him dwell in the tents of Shem,
And let Canaan be his slave.[1]

The following song of blessing also belongs to the period of the Judges or the early monarchy:

The Blessing of Isaac, Genesis 27:27-29

See, the scent of my son,
As the scent of a plentiful field,
Which Yahweh hath blessed.
Give thee God from heaven's dew,
And from the fats of the earth,
Wealth of corn and wine!
Serve thee the tribes,
Bow to thee peoples!
Be lord to thy brothers,
Thy mother's sons bow to thee!
Who curse thee be cursed,
And who bless thee be blessed![2]

The following fragment concerning the two sons of Isaac, Jacob and Esau, the progenitors of the Israelites and Edomites respectively, comes from the same traditions as the blessings and so may have originated in the early days of the monarchy. The Israelites were especially bitter in their hatred of the Edomites because of their inhuman cruelty:

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[1] Translation from J. A. Bewer, *The Literature of the Old Testament,* p. 11.

[2] G. A. Smith, *The Early Poetry of Israel,* p. 49. The meter in this poem is mixed, some lines having three and others two stresses.

The Birth-Song of the Two Nations, Genesis 25:23

Two nations are in thy womb
Two peoples part from thy bowels:
People shall crush people:
  The elder shall serve the younger.[8]

Ths Blessing of Jacob, Genesis 49

The Blessing of Jacob is a series of oracles describing the character and fortunes of the twelve tribes of Israel as unfolded during the ages of the Judges and the early monarchy. To present Jacob as the speaker, according to the old custom of the fathers gathering their sons about their deathbeds, seems to have been part of the original intention of the poems. The process of composition was probably a protracted one and it was the finished product which was ultimately incorporated in the patriarchal tradition of the Jahwist editor. The poems are animated by a strong sentiment inspired by nationhood and not by family feeling as in the earlier days. The blessing upon Joseph was probably intended for the Northern Kingdom, which was often spoken of as Ephraim since Ephraim and Manasseh were the two sons of Joseph:

A fruitful bough is Joseph,
A fruitful bough by a spring;
With offshoots o'ermounting the wall.

. . . . .

Blessings of heaven above,
Blessings of the deep that croucheth under,
Blessings of breasts and womb.

. . . . .

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[8] A. R. Gordon, *Poets of the Old Testament,* p. 38.

Blessings of the everlasting mountains,
The desire of the eternal hills,
May they be upon Joseph's head,
On the head of him crowned among brothers.[4]

But the richest blessing is reserved for Judah, for on Judah the hope of the nation rests (verse 10):

Judah, thee shall thy brethren praise:
  Thy hand shall be on the neck of thy foes,
  Thy father's sons shall bow down before thee.
Judah is a lion's whelp;
  From the prey my son thou art gone up:
He stoops down, he couches as a lion
  And as a lioness; who shall rouse him up?
The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,
  Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,
Until he come to whom it belongs,
  And whose is the homage of peoples.[5]

The Oracles of Balaam, Numbers 22, 23, 24

The poems or oracles of Balaam are embedded in a simple and charming tale of the early wandering days. The words and style are suggestive of the very earliest literary period, perhaps during the reigns of Saul or David. The oracles are put into the mouth of Balaam by the same literary license which ascribed the blessings to Jacob and others among the ancestors of the Israelites. The story relates how the people of Midian became so frightened at the increasing power of Israel that the Moabite king, Balak, called to his aid the services of a noted seer or diviner, Balaam, whose curses were expected to halt the advancing Israelites. The seers of that day combined in their person the ritual functions of the priest, the fortune teller's reliance upon omens, and the ecstasy and conviction of the genuine prophet. Thus we sometimes get the crudest conceptions of God and some of the nobler inspirations of the prophet from one and the same source.

[4] E. G. King, *Early Religious Poetry of the Hebrews,* p. 23.
[5] J. A. Bewer, *The Literature of the Old Testament,* p. 12.

The chiefs of Moab and Midian come to Balaam not once but twice, the second time laden with still heavier gifts. The gifts perhaps carry some weight but the real conflict in Balaam's mind is between his customary methods of speaking hitherto and the promptings of the new influence of Yahweh which is now working upon him. Although he finally agrees to go to meet Balak he insists that he will speak only as Yahweh may direct him. In the face of all the attempts to force from him curses upon Israel, Balaam never swerves from adherence to the course which he feels God is going to reveal to him. He is experiencing the birth pangs of new truth as the result of his hard-pressed loyalty.

Balaam pronounces four oracles, each a step in advance of its predecessor. In the first he refuses to damn a people whom God has not damned. In the second he declares that God is blessing Israel and the details of this blessing are pointed out in the third oracle. In the fourth he warns Moab of the coming supremacy of Israel. Bewer says, "The revelation of the divine purpose to a non-Israelite, the manner of Balaam's prophetic inspiration, and the emphasis on God's consistency, are as important for our understanding of the development of Israel's religion as the political references are for the history of the early monarchy."[6]

The First Oracle (*Numbers 23:7-10*)

From Aram has Balak brought me,
  The King of Moab from the mountains of the East;
Come, curse me Jacob,
  And come, denounce Israel!
How shall I curse whom God has not cursed?
  And how shall I denounce whom Yahweh has not
    denounced?

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[6] J. A. Bewer, *The Literature of the Old Testament,* p. 13. The translation given here is also from Bewer. The student is urged to compare this with the rendering of George Adam Smith, *Early Religious Poetry of Israel,* pp. 72 ff., especially for the meter and the critical questions involved.

For from the top of the rocks I see him,
  And from the hills I behold him:
Lo, it is a people that dwells alone,
  And that reckons itself not among the nations.
Who can count the dust of Jacob,
  Or number the myriads of Israel?
Let me die the death of the righteous,
  And let my last end be like his!

The Second Oracle (*Numbers 23:18-24*)

Rise up, Balak and hear;
  Hearken to me, O son of Zippor:
God is not a man that He should break His word,
  Neither the son of man that He should change His mind.
Should he promise and not do it?
  Or speak and not make it good?
Behold I have received orders to bless:
  And He has blessed and I cannot reverse it.
He has not beheld calamity in Jacob;
  Nor seen trouble in Israel:
Yahweh his God is with him,
  And the shout for his king is among them.
God who brought them forth out of Egypt,
  Is for him like the horns (?) of the wild-ox.
How shall it be said of Jacob and Israel,
  What has God wrought!
Behold, the people rises up like a lioness,
  And like a lion it lifts itself up:
It shall not lie down till it eat the prey
  And drink the blood of the slain.

The Third Oracle (*Numbers 24:3-9*)

The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor,
Even the oracle of the man whose eye was opened,
The oracle of him who hears the words of God,
Who sees the vision of the Almighty,
Falling down and having his eyes opened:
How beautiful are thy tents, O Jacob,
  thy tabernacles, O Israel!
Like valleys are they spread forth
  like gardens by the riverside,
Like cedars which Yahweh has planted,
  like palms beside the waters.

A man shall come from his seed (?)
  and shall rule over many nations,
And his kingdom shall be higher than Agag,
  and his kingdom shall be exalted.
God who brought him out of Egypt;
  is for him like the horns of the wild-ox:
He shall devour the nations, his adversaries,
  and break their bones in pieces,
  and shatter their loins.
He couched, he lay down like a lion,
  and like a lioness, who shall rouse him up?
Blessed is every one that blesses thee,
  and cursed is every one that curses thee.

The Fourth Oracle (*Numbers 24:15-19*)

The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor,
Even the oracle of the man whose eye was opened,
The oracle of him who hears the words of God,
And knows the knowledge of the Most High,
Who sees the vision of the Almighty,
Falling down and having his eyes opened:

I see him, but not now;
  I behold him but not nigh:
A star has shone forth out of Jacob,
  a sceptre has risen out of Israel,
And it smites through the temples of Moab,
  and the skulls of all the sons of tumult.

And Edom shall be a possession,
  while Israel does valiant deeds,
And Jacob shall trample down his enemies,
  and destroy the survivors of Seir.

The Grand Processional (*Psalm 24*)

Processional hymns attained to popularity in the later Temple worship.[7] This psalm was probably used as a hymn in the celebration of a victory. It pictures the Ark of Yahweh on its way from the battlefield to the Temple, and it may have been actually so carried.[8] The procession would be headed by a choir and soloist, accompanied by men appointed to carry the ark. The first part was sung on the march and the second before the gate of the city or Temple. The high ethical tone of the first half is noteworthy with its stress on social righteousness rather than on cultic cleanness. The moral requirements thus emphasized should be compared with those of Psalm 15, which was not a part of the liturgy.

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[7] Such a procession is described in Psalm 68:24:
They have seen thy goings, O God,
Even the goings of my God, my King, into the sanctuary.
The singers went before, the minstrels followed after,
In the midst of the damsels playing with timbrels.

1. ON THE MARCH [9]

Men's choir

The earth is Yahweh's and its fullness,
  the world and they that dwell therein.
For He hath founded it upon the seas,
  and established it upon the floods.[10]

Soloist

Who may ascend the hill of Yahweh?
  and who may stand in His holy place?

Choir

He that hath clean hands and a pure heart,
  and who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood,
  and has not sworn deceitfully.
He shall receive a blessing from Yahweh,
  and a vindication from the God of his salvation.
Such is the generation that inquires for Him,
  that seeks the God of Jacob's face.

---

[8] Some scholars divide the psalm into two parts: verses 1-6 and 7-10. Ewald attributes both parts to David, a statement which Driver refers to but does not discuss. It may be that some processional was used by David in bringing the ark from the house of Obed-edom the Gittite to Jerusalem, but surely not in these terms.

[9] The translation given is that of Bewer, *The Literature of the Old Testament,* pp. 352 f. Professor Bewer is not responsible for this particular liturgical arrangement. The student should compare this with the musical rendering of the American version.

[10] They believed the earth to rest on a subterranean body of water.

2. BEFORE THE GATES

Choir

Lift up your heads, O ye gates,
  and be ye lift up, ye ancient doors,
  that the King of Glory may come in!

Keeper

Who is the King of Glory?

Congregation

Yahweh, strong and mighty,
Yahweh, mighty in battle!

Choir

Lift up your heads, O ye gates,
  yea, lift them up, ye ancient doors,
  that the King of Glory may come in!

Keeper

Who is the King of Glory?

Congregation

Yahweh, the God of Hosts,
He is the King of Glory!

The Pilgrim Psalter, Psalms 120-134

There are fifteen songs in this charming collection, called in the Authorized Version, the "Songs of Ascents." Some have thought that this title referred to the return from the Captivity of Judah, but the truer view is that these are songs which were sung by the pilgrims as they came to the great annual festivals at Jerusalem. These festal pilgrimages were occasions of great joy. On a given day the cry of the watchman would ring out, "Arise ye, and let us go to Zion unto Yahweh our God" (Jer. 31:6). Then pilgrims would gather from all points in bands and march on their way to the sound of the pipe. As they traveled they would sing these songs. They were originally written for a variety of purposes and embrace various themes.

Imagine these groups as they slowly wended their way through the villages and by the farms on the long journey to Jerusalem. The women would be traveling in groups, with the men in other groups by themselves. There was plenty of opportunity to meet old friends, to gossip by the way, and to observe anything of interest. Thus time flew by faster than the ground covered by the caravan. They would spread their meals in shady places, and sleep on the soft grass under the friendly stars. The allusions to the farmer, the sowing and reaping, the building of the house, and the watchman in the tower were all the sights seen by the wayside.

The groups that came from the north of Palestine to Jerusalem had to pass over ancient roads and historic battlefields, on which they would meet the caravans bearing the commerce of the nations. They would also pass by many of the nation's most sacred shrines. As they neared the city of their hopes its historical associations would well-nigh overwhelm their hearts with emotion. Take, for example, Psalm 124. The leader sang in a clear, strong voice:

> If it had not been for Yahweh who was on our side—

The chorus then repeats this line and continues:

> If it had not been for Yahweh who was on our side
> when men rose up against us;
> Then they had swallowed us up alive,
> when their wrath was kindled against us;
> Then the waters had overwhelmed us,
> the stream had gone over our soul;
> Then had gone over our soul
> the proud waters.

Then the people burst out in praise:

> Blessed be Yahweh who has not given us
> as a prey to their teeth.
> Our soul is escaped as a bird
> out of the snare of the fowlers:

The snare is broken and
we are escaped.
Our help is in the name of Yahweh
who made heaven and earth.[11]

One of the most beautiful pilgrim songs, Psalm 126, describes the condition of the returned exiles who had come back to Jerusalem with high hopes engendered by the predictions of the Second Isaiah, only to be disappointed in the event. Although Israel had not received the welcome they hoped for, a humble faith remains that out of the seed sown with tears will yet come a harvest of joy:

When Yahweh turned Zion's fate,
we were like them that dream.
Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
and our tongue with singing:
Then said they among the nations,
"Yahweh has done great things for them."
Yahweh has done great things for us,
whereof we are glad.

Turn our fate, O Yahweh,
as the streams in the South land.
They that sow with tears
shall reap in joy.
He that goes forth and weeps,
when he carries seed for sowing,
Shall doubtless come home with joy,
when he brings his (harvest) sheaves.[12]

Psalms 121, 122 and 125 would be appropriate to use as the pilgrims neared the city or entered it. Psalm 121 is one of the world's exquisite lyric treasures. At their first sight of the city the precentor would sing:

I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains:
from whence shall my help come?

---

[11] Translation from Bewer, *The Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 348.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 348. See also American version for rendering.

The chorus would respond:

My help comes from Yahweh,
who made heaven and earth.

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved:
He that keeps thee will not sleep.
Behold, nor slumbers nor sleeps
Israel's keeper.

Yahweh is thy keeper, Yahweh is thy shade
upon thy right hand.
The sun shall not smite thee by day,
nor the moon by night.

Yahweh will keep thee from all evil,
He will keep thy soul.
Yahweh will keep thy going out and thy coming in
From this time forth and forevermore.[13]

When at last the pilgrims arrived in Jerusalem many of them would be looking on the city for the first time. "With mingled joy and awe they entered the temple, meditated on the kindness of God, and determined to publish His praise and His righteousness to the ends of the earth. Aye, the joy of all the worshippers! and especially of the pilgrims who had come from distant lands as they now walked about Zion and marked each tower and gate, each bulwark and palace."[14] For very love they would sing:

I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go up into the house of the Lord.

Our feet shall stand within thy gates,
Within thy gates, O Jerusalem. (122:1, 2).

They that trust in Yahweh
Shall be as the Mount of Zion,
Which cannot be moved,
It shall abide forever.

---

[13] Translation from Bewer, *The Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 349.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 350. The reader is referred to Bewer, pp. 347 ff., for further particulars concerning the pilgrim psalms.

As the mountains are round about Jerusalem
So Yahweh is round about them that fear him. (125:1, 2).

The same passionate love of country reappears in one of the Exile songs, Psalm 137:

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
May my right hand fail me!
May my tongue cleave to my palate,
If I do not remember thee;
If I set not Jerusalem
Above my highest joy.[15]

THE GREAT HALLELS

The words *Hallel Yah* meant the praise of Yah or Yahweh. Our English Hallelujah is the transliteration of the verb in the second person plural, which means "praise (ye) Yahweh." There were four groups of Hallels: Psalms 104-107; 111-117; 135-136; and 146-150. Psalms 113 and 114 were sung before the Passover, and Psalms 115 and 116 after the same feast. These psalms are highly liturgical and were composed after the Temple service had been elaborated.

Psalm 114 contains some interesting historical allusions to the Exodus from Egypt. It has a unique strophic arrangement which Moulton calls "Inversion."[16] Antistrophe 1 does not perfectly balance Strophe 1 but nearly enough to be sung antiphonally:

STROPHE 1

When Israel went out of Egypt,
The house of Jacob from a people of strange language,
Judah became his sanctuary,
Israel his dominion.

STROPHE 2

The sea saw it and fled:
Jordan was driven back,
The mountains skipped like rams,
The little hills like young sheep.

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[15] Translation is by Professor J. M. P. Smith.

[16] R. G. Moulton, *Literary Study of the Bible,* p. 55.

ANTISTROPHE 2

What aileth thee, O thou sea, that thou fleest?
Thou Jordan, that thou turnest back?
Ye mountains, that ye skip like rams?
Ye little hills, like young sheep?

ANTISTROPHE 1

Tremble thou earth, at the presence of the Lord,
At the presence of the God of Jacob:
Which turneth the rock into a pool of water,
The flint into a fountain of waters.

The first strophe presents a new conception of deity. The jurisdiction of the primitive gods was confined to one land but Israel's God accompanies his people on their migration. The second strophe which pictures the commotion raised by this new departure in nature is followed by its antistrophe, which asks for an explanation. The explanation which is implicit in Strophe 1 is made explicit in Antistrophe 1. These lands which Israel is traveling through belong not to another but to Israel's God.

Psalm 136 has been called "The Great Hallel." It is composed of twenty-six couplets, the first member celebrating some phase of Yahweh's providence and the second answering with the same refrain "for his mercy endureth forever," repeated each time.

Psalm 150 was written late. It is a song of praise to Yahweh, which makes a suitable closing number for the entire collection.

FOR STUDY AND COMPARISON

The student interested in comparing the great national songs of various nations will find the same themes and motifs devoted to this use among all peoples: the achievements of the nation, its victories in war, praise of its heroes, love of the homeland, and praise and thanksgiving for the common blessings of life. A collection of such songs will offer interesting material for comparison with the Hebrew songs. The following list of titles is only suggestive:

S. F. SMITH, "America."
RUDYARD KIPLING, "Recessional."
R. W. EMERSON, "Boston Hymn."
O. W. HOLMES, "God Bless Our Fatherland."
DONIZETTI, "O Italia, Italia."
RUSSEL, "The Birth of Australia."
STRINDBERG, "Swedish National Hymn."
CALLINUS, "How Long Will Ye Slumber?" (Greek.)
KNOWLES, "Switzerland."
KATHERINE LEE BATES, "America the Beautiful."

2. THE NOTE OF SORROW

In this section fall those songs which mourn the dead or bewail the fate of nations. It embraces elegies and dirges with individuals as their subjects and the doom songs of nations as well as the laments of Israel over her own hapless fate. The distinctive measure for this kind of poetry is the *kinah*, although its use for this purpose is by no means exclusive.

THE DIRGES OF DAVID

The Dirge for Abner, II Samuel 3:33, 34.
The Elegy on Saul and Jonathan, II Samuel 1:19-26.

These are the only extant elegies in the early poetry of Israel. The dirge for Abner contains six lines, the first two and the fifth having two stresses each and the others three. The introduction (verse 33) uses the proper term to indicate how it should be sung, *konen* (of which the noun is *kinah*):[17]

As dieth a fool
Must Abner die?
Thy hands unbound and thy feet,
Nor thrust into gyves.
As falleth a fool
To the lawless fallen art thou!

---

[17] G. A. Smith, *The Early Poetry of Israel*, p. 96. Smith points out the similarity between *konen* and the Irish word *keening*, a death wail.

The elegy on Saul and Jonathan is taken from an early collection of songs, the *Book of Jashar.* The lines are mainly of four stresses each, with here and there shorter ones in true *kinah* measure. The irregular meter may be a true index to the strong sobbing passion of the poet. King says, "It breathes the spirit of the highlander grieving for brave comrades slain on their mountains by the despised and hated Philistine of the lowlands":[18]

Thou roebuck of Israel! pierced on thine own
mountain heights!
How are the mighty fallen!

Tell it not in Gath;
Announce it not in the streets of Askelon;
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice;
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph!

Ye hills of Gilboa be dewless!
Ye fields of oblation be rainless!
For there was the shield of heroes polluted;
The shield of Saul, without the anointing.

From the blood of the slain—
From the fat of the mighty—
The bow of Jonathan turned not back—
The sword of Saul returned not empty.

Saul and Jonathan!—
So dear, so delightful in life;—
And in death undivided!
They were swifter than eagles, stronger than lions.

Ye daughters of Israel—
Weep over Saul,
Who clad you in scarlet and luxury,
Who decked your apparel with jewelry.

Refrain

How are the mighty fallen!
In the midst of the battle!
Ah, Jonathan! pierced on thine own mountain
heights!

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[18] E. G. King, *Early Religious Poetry of the Hebrews,* p. 17. King's translation is followed here.

Woe is me for thee, my brother!
Jonathan to me so dear!
Thy love to me more marvelous
  Than woman's love.

Refrain

How are the mighty fallen!
  The war weapons perished!

The word translated *roebuck* in the first line came to mean also "pride," "beauty," or "delight," because of the superb carriage of the roebuck in the pride of its strength.

This is one of the most beautiful elegies in literature. In the light of its historical setting, as given in I Samuel, its noble spirit becomes accentuated. David had respected and spared Saul as long as he was king. He slew the messenger who brought the news of Saul's death, which he thought would be welcome to David. The poem palpitates with an evident sincerity of grief engendered by comradeship on the field of battle. It shows intense appreciation of the virtues and achievements of Saul and Jonathan, keen relish of life, and a most passionate sense of personal attachment. It, however, sounds no note of hope. This may be a natural omission in the hour of abandonment to grief, but we must remember that Israel had not yet come to a belief in another life beyond this.

An interesting example for comparison is the old Gaelic lament on the death of Oscar, beginning:

Say, Bard of the Feinn of Erin,
How fared the fight, Fergus, my Son,
In Gabhra's fierce battle day? Say!
The fight fared not well, son of Cumhaill,
From Gabhra come tidings of ruin,
For Oscar the fearless is slain.
The sons of Caeilte were seven;
They fell with the Feinn of Alban.
The youth of the Feinn are fallen,
Are dead in their battle array,

And dead on the field lies McLuy,
With six of the sons of thy sire.
The young men of Alban are fallen;
The Feinn of Breatan are fallen;
And dead is the King's son of Lachlan,
Who hasted to war for our right—
The King's son with a heart ever open,
An arm ever strong in the fight.[19]

This quatrain of grief is a classic:

Woe is me for thee my brother!
Jonathan to me more dear!
Thy love to me more marvelous
  Than woman's love.

Similarly Tennyson writes of his friend, Arthur:

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
Till all my widow'd race be run;
Dear as the mother to the son,
More than my brothers are to me!

Or take the fine elegy of *Lycidas:*

For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer,
  Who would not weep for Lycidas?

The prophets used the same *kinah* measure in their laments over Jerusalem. Such a short but effective bit of wailing is found in Amos 5:2:

Israel the virgin is fallen,
She ariseth no more,
Prostrate she lies upon the ground,
With none to upraise her.[20]

Jeremiah uses the dirge measure in 7:29:

Shear off thy locks—away with them—
Lift up a dirge on the height:
For Yahweh hath spurned and forsaken
The race that hath roused his anger.[21]

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[19] Henry Morley, *English Writers,* Vol. I, pp. 194 f.
[20] Translations by Duhm and McFadyen.
[21] Translation by King. Other examples are Jeremiah 9; Ezekiel 19:2-14; and in a more diffuse style 31:3-8.

The Lament of the Captives, Psalm 137
The Longing for Jerusalem, Psalms 42 and 43

The desolation of the Jews in exile, their loneliness and homesickness, their love for distant Jerusalem and their longing for God take many forms of expression, but nowhere is this grief expressed so poignantly as in these psalms. Psalm 137 was composed during the Babylonian Captivity, when the ridicule of their oppressors was a daily rankling experience. To understand the last stanza better the reader should turn to Obadiah, verses 10-14, with its pictures of the treachery of the Edomites as they helped the Babylonians sack Jerusalem, loot the possessions of the inhabitants, and cut off their escape at the crossroads. This vindictive stanza voices the age-old and relentless hatred of the Israelites for their heartless cousins. We are attracted by the beauty and pathos but repelled by the savage cruelty of its conclusion. It is written mostly in the dirge measure:

By Babylon's waters we sat and we wept,
As we thought upon Zion.
There on the willows within her
  We hung our harps.
For there our captors demanded
The language of song!
Our plunderers asked of us mirth!
"Sing us one of the songs of Zion."

How can we sing the songs of Yahweh
  In a land of strangers?
Could I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
My right hand should forget!
My tongue should cleave to my palate
If unmindful of thee!
If I set not Jerusalem higher
Than best of my joy!

Remember, Yahweh, the sons of Edom
The day of Jerusalem,
Who said, "lay bare! lay bare!
To the foundation of it."

Happy be he who repayeth it,
What thou didst deal us.
Happy be he who seizeth and dasheth thy little ones
Against the rock.[22]

Many scholars are of the opinion that Psalms 42 and 43 were originally one.[23] A main piece of evidence in favor of this unity is the repetition of the refrain:

Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
And why art thou disquieted within me?
  Hope thou in God;
For I shall yet praise Him,
Who is the health of my countenance
  And my God!

which these psalms contain. Each of the three strophes is followed by this refrain. The first strophe (42:1-4) expresses the soul's longing for God; the second (42:6-10) its undying affection for Jerusalem, and the third strophe (43:1-4) the overthrow of its enemies. The main text is in the *kinah* measure with the refrain in the 3-3 measure.

The memorable first strophe is translated as follows by King:

As bleateth the stag for the channels of waters,
  So bleateth my soul for thee, O God.

My soul is athirst for Yahweh—
  For the God of my life!
When shall I come and behold
  The presence of Yahweh?
Tears have been mine for food,
  By day and by night,
While they say to me all day long,
  Where is thy God?

---

[22] Laura Wild, *A Literary Guide to the Bible,* p. 174.

[23] So S. R. Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament,* pp. 344-345; Moulton, *The Literary Study of the Bible,* p. 60; E. G. King, *Early Religious Poetry of the Hebrews,* pp. 50-51. Moulton's arrangement and King's translation are given here. The two psalms are printed as one in thirty-three Hebrew MSS.

In the first line King chooses the word "bleateth" as the nearest English equivalent for the onomatopœic Hebrew word which seeks to echo the voice of the thirsty stag. In Joel 1:20 the desolation and impotence of the exiled soul is likened unto the suffering of the thirsty beasts who find that the streams of water are dry.

THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS

The book of Lamentations, one of the five Megilloth or "rolls," is a collection of five separate elegies which was read regularly at the Feast of Ab, in commemoration of the destruction of the Temple and the burning of Jerusalem by Nebuchadrezzar.[24] It was natural that tradition should assign the elegies to Jeremiah, because the catastrophe they memorialize occurred in his day and much of his prophecy is delivered in this same strain. They are first explicitly attributed to Jeremiah in the Septuagint, from which the tradition passed to the Syriac and Vulgate versions and thence to the Christian church. But there are weighty, and in the opinion of most scholars, conclusive reasons against regarding Jeremiah as the author of these poems. While they reveal the same sensitive temper and display the same emotional outbursts, and trace the same sins to the same causes, there are such striking differences in technical matters of construction, in historical allusions, in vocabulary and phrasing, and finally in the views of salvation, that scholars not only deny the authorship of them to Jeremiah but are almost unanimous in denying the unity of the book.

The Hebrews called the book *Ekah*, meaning "How," from its opening word; but the Talmud calls it *Kinoth*, the plural of *kinah*, a dirge, the word from which the name of its unique meter is derived. Kinoth translated into the Greek became *threnoi,* which reappears in the Latin Vulgate as *threni.*

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[24] Compare II Kings 25:8, 9 and Jeremiah 52:12, 13. Ab was the fifth month of the Jewish year and corresponds to the latter part of July and the first part of August.

The book is written in lengthy lines in the *kinah* meter with a cæsural pause in the middle. Chapters one and two are composed of twenty-two verses each, three lines to each verse, the first line of the successive verses beginning with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Chapter three has the same number but divides the lines into sixty-six verses, one line to each verse. The first three lines begin with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the next three with the second letter, and so on to the end. Chapter four is like one, except that each verse has two lines. Chapter five has the twenty-two verses, but it does not follow the alphabetical rule.

Here the Hebrew elegy reaches its perfect development. The elegiac meter is adhered to with a uniformity that one rarely finds in Hebrew verse. Although the poetical form is thus fixed it conveys, nevertheless, the passion which the poet felt. A few lines will serve to illustrate:

Alas! how doth the city solitary, that was full of people!
how is she become as a widow, she that was great among the nations,
the princes among the provinces, how is she become tributary.

By night she weepeth, the tears are on her cheeks,
among all her lovers she hath none left to comfort her;
all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies.[25]

Although the prevailing note of Lamentations is one of resignation and patient endurance, these elegies testify to the extraordinary tenacity and resilience of the Jewish character as expressed in the maintenance or recovery of its devotion to the homeland, even when conditions were most desperate. The spirit of the Jews bent under persecution but it never broke. Here is something very tender and noble in its essence. We do these people an injustice if we interpret their elegies as a sign of weakness pointing to national dissolution. That resolute reliance upon a divine source of strength, with which they are permeated, is the priceless legacy of Judaism to the rest of the world. The following is offered as an analysis of the book:

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[25] See H. T. Fowler, *The Literature of Ancient Israel,* p. 247.

I. The fact of Jerusalem's desolation and its justice, chap. 1.
II. The cause—Yahweh's righteous anger because of Israel's sin, chap. 2.
III. Yahweh's lovingkindness is the basis of any hope, chap. 3.
IV. Horrors of the siege of Jerusalem depicted, chap. 4.
V. The prayer for mercy and deliverance, chap. 5.

The Doom of Babylon, Isaiah 14:4-19

This fitting example of a doom song is written in the elegiac rhythm. While these doom songs are cast in the mournful meter the singer is elated by the vindication of Yahweh involved in the visitation of richly deserved retribution. It is doubtful if literature contains the equal of this song as a pæan of joy at the downfall of an oppressor:

How still has the Tyrant become,
  How still the terror!
The Lord has broken the staff of the wicked,
  The sceptre of rulers,
Who smote the people in wrath
  With smiting incessant,
And trampled the nations in anger
  With trampling unchecked.
All the earth is at rest, is quiet,
  They break into singing;
Even the cypresses rejoice at your fate,
  The cedars of Lebanon:
"Since you were laid low, there comes up
  No woodman against us."

Sheol beneath is thrilled
  To greet your coming;
She stirs up for you the shades,
  All the rams of the earth;

She lifts from their thrones
  All the kings of the nations.
All of them will answer,
  And will say to you,
"So you too have become weak as we are,
  Have been made like to us!"
Brought down to Sheol in your pomp,
  The noise of your harps;
Beneath you maggots are spread,
  Worms are your covering.

How are you fallen from heaven,
  O Lucifer, son of the dawn!
How you are hewn to the earth,
  Who laid waste all the nations!
You said to yourself,
  "The heavens will I scale;
Above the stars of God
  Will I set my throne;
I will sit on the Mount of Assembly,
  In the recesses of the North;
I will scale the heights of the clouds,
  I will match the Most High."
But down to Sheol you are brought,
  To the recesses of the Pit.

Those who see you will gaze at you,
  They will scan you closely:
"Is this the man who caused the earth to quiver,
  Caused kingdoms to quake;
Who made the world like a desert,
  And tore down its cities;
Who set not his prisoners free,
  To return to their homes?"
All the kings of the nations, all of them,
Have lain down in glory, each in his house;
But you are cast forth tombless,
  Like a hateful abortion,
Clothed with slain men gashed by the sword,
Who go down to the stones of the Pit—
  Like a trampled corpse.[26]

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[26] Translation from J. M. P. Smith, *The Old Testament, An American Translation.* This gives a better idea of the original *kinah* meter than any translation we know.

For Study and Comparison

No other nation has ever used the elegiac rhythm in the voicing of national sorrow to the extent the Hebrews did. Many of these poems have points of kinship with the patriotic lyric, but in measure and attitude they are unique. On the other hand, the impulse to give expression to personal sorrow is common to all peoples and writings of this character closely link sorrow with religion. English literature is full of poems of this kind, many of them founded on biblical themes. A few are here suggested in the hope that the student will make a comparative study:

Robert Burns, "Prayer at the Prospect of Death."
John McCrae, "In Flanders Fields."
John Milton, "Lycidas."
Adelaide Ann Proctor, "The Lost Chord."
George Santayana, "Sorrow."
Robert W. Service, "The Quest."
Percy B. Shelley, "Adonais."
Alfred, Lord Tennyson, "In Memoriam."

The deepest truth that the Hebrew people taught the world was the place and office of vicarious suffering, as exemplified in such prophets as Hosea and Jeremiah and by Jesus upon the cross. It was based on the conviction that God enters into human life with intent to save. Wherever this understanding of God's nature and disposition comes to expression, credit for it must usually be given to the Hebrew prophets:

> The sorrows of God mun be 'ard to bear
> If 'e really 'as love in 'is 'eart;
> And the 'ardest part in the world to play
> Mun surely be God's part.

The Hebrew poets also taught that while it is not so hard to die for a winning cause, it is hard, indeed, when the cause seems perishing, too, for

> If ye break faith with us who die
> We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
> In Flanders Fields.
>
> —McCrae, "In Flanders Fields."

Perhaps no one has better voiced the poignant sense of emptiness following in the wake of the death of a friend, or envisaged the comfort that Christ gives, better than Mrs. Browning in "Substitution":

> When some beloved voice that was to you
> Both sound and sweetness faileth suddenly,
> And silence against which you dare not cry,
> Aches round you like a strong disease and new—
> What hope? What help? What music will undo
> That silence to your sense? Not friendship's sigh,
> Nor reason's subtle count; not melody
> Of viols, nor of pipes that Faunus blew;
> Not songs of poets nor of nightingales,
> Whose hearts leap upward through the cypress trees
> To the clear moon; nor yet the spheric laws,
> Self-chanted, nor the angels' sweet "All-hails,"
> Met in the smile of God: Nay, none of these,
> Speak *Thou,* availing Christ!—and fill this pause.

Discussion Topics and Exercises

1. Select fifteen patriotic poems and hymns of various nations and compare their themes with those in the Psalms, noting those which are common.
2. Select fifteen elegies and dirges with the same end in view.
3. Study and compare the relation of patriotism to religion in America, Europe, and Asia with the Hebrew view of the covenant relation of Israel to Yahweh.

Books to Consult

Bewer, J. A., *The Literature of the Old Testament,* Chaps. 1, 20.
Cobb, W. H., *The Book of Psalms.*
Driver, S. R., *Introduction to the Old Testament,* "Psalms."
Gordon, A. R., *Poets of the Old Testament,* Chaps. 5, 8, 9.
Fowler, H. T., *A History of the Literature of Ancient Israel,* Chaps. 3, 25.
Kent, C. F., *Student's Old Testament,* Vol. V.
King, E. G., *Early Religious Poetry of the Hebrews.*
Matthews, *Old Testament Life and Literature.*
Moulton, R. G., *Modern Reader's Bible,* one volume edition, "Psalms"; see Index.
——, *The Literary Study of the Bible;* see Index.

PETERS, JOHN P., *The Psalms as Liturgies.*
VAN DYKE, HENRY, *The Story of the Psalms.*
——, *The Poetry of the Psalms.*
SMITH, GEORGE ADAM, *The Early Poetry of Israel.*
SMITH, J. M. P., *The Old Testament, An American Translation.*
WILD, LAURA, *A Literary Guide to the Bible.*

CHAPTER IX

SONGS OF FAITH

1. God Revealed in Nature

The love of nature which is apparent in almost every page of the biblical writings is an almost constant theme of the psalms. Keen observation and delicate description of her outward phases are coupled with an intuitive perception of her inner meaning. The poet's eye delights in the grass and the flower, the clinging vine and the tender olive stem, the soaring eagle, the panting hart, or the trembling dove. He is stirred by the larger aspects of nature: the hoary mountain slopes, the sea and its deeps, the "foundations of the earth," "the heavens stretched out as a curtain," the sun, the moon and the stars, those "portals of the morning and the evening."

The Hebrews did not indulge much in mystical speculation. They thought of the world objectively and as being literally the handwork of God. The point of view of nature as "red in tooth and claw" would never occur to the Hebrew poet nor did he ever look to nature for the ultimate explanation of things. He thought of the natural world as responsive to its Creator: if the hills leaped for joy and the mountains "skipped like rams" they were doing homage to Him. Man might rebel but nature was completely at God's bidding.

A poet would be less than human were his own moods not reflected in his descriptions of nature. Bryant's "Thanatopsis" reflects one mood and "To a Waterfowl" a very different orientation of his mind. For every mood of man nature can supply a voice. In the Old Testament the garb she wears turns drab when man is bowed beneath a weight of sorrow, and when his heart is filled with joy she puts on brighter colors. There is a sense of intimate fellowship with nature running through these Hebrew poems, but we find no trace of that common primitive tendency to populate nature with hordes of spirits, which aid or harass human beings at will. In the main the view of God is transcendent, but Psalm 139 presents the thought of an immanent and omniscient God. The later doctrine of God's Wisdom, with its belief in an all-penetrating divine intelligence, had many points in common with the view of God and nature held by the Greek thinkers.

The poems which we shall study are not philosophical in character. God is conceived as apart from the world, but the world is his servant. They are realistic as the Hebrew understood realism. Frequent flashes of beauty, a wealth of similes and pictorial images, and genuine touches of inspiration clothed in delicate and happy phrasing are noticeable features in them. These poems are closely linked with faith; in fact, they are songs of trust.

THE STORM THEME

The Thunderstorm Psalm, Psalm 29. Compare also Psalms 18:7-15; 77:16-19.
God's Majesty in the Storm, Job 36:24-37:22.
Habakkuk's Psalm of Praise, Habakkuk 3:3-16.

The twenty-ninth Psalm is the Song of the Thunderstorm. Obviously the poet was standing on some peak, watching a storm passing over the Mediterranean Sea or above the even deeper Jordan valley. First the clouds form and gather like dark hosts prepared for a rushing forward march. The thunder is the voice of Yahweh. It is this "voice of Yahweh" which uproots trees, cleaves the rocks in twain, shivers the oaks, hacks out the lightning, lashes the sea and makes the mountains tremble. Yahweh himself is seated in calmness above the storm in which his voice rides over the earth as in a chariot. The same instrumental function is attributed to the voice of Yahweh as in the creation poems.

The poem is composed of a fairly well-balanced arrangement of five strophes, the first and last strophes of four lines each forming a prelude and postlude of praise to Yahweh and an assurance of peace. The four lines of the postlude have four accents each and they form a stair-like parallelism. The body of the poem (verses 3-9), which is divided into three strophes, describes the storm. A line of verse 9 is omitted in the translation here given. It contains an allusion to the *Temple* which was evidently not in the original. In reading aloud "the Lord" may be used instead of "Yahweh" as it fits the meter better:

Ascribe to Yahweh, ye sons of God,
Ascribe to Yahweh, glory and strength.
Ascribe to Yahweh the glory due his name;
Worship Yahweh in the beauty of holiness.

The voice of Yahweh is over the waters;
The God of glory thunders.
Yahweh is over the mighty waters!
The voice of Yahweh is mighty,
The voice of Yahweh is majestic.

The voice of Yahweh breaks the cedars,
Yahweh shatters the cedars of Lebanon.
He maketh Lebanon to skip like a calf
And Sirion as a young wild ox.
The voice of Yahweh cleaves the rocks,
Yahweh cleaves them with a blade of fire.

The voice of Yahweh lashes the desert,
Yahweh lashes the desert of Kadesh.
The voice of Yahweh shivers the oaks
And strips the forests bare.

Yahweh sits enthroned above the Flood,
Yahweh will sit enthroned forever.
Yahweh gives strength to his people;
Yahweh blesses his people with peace.[1]

The identification of Yahweh, the historic God of Israel, with the ruler of the storm is one of the most daring strokes of the Hebrew poetic genius. Compare the above with Edwin Markham's "The Place of Peace":

At the heart of the cyclone tearing the sky
And flinging the clouds and the towers by,
Is a place of central calm;
So here in the roar of mortal things,
I have a place where my spirit sings,
In the hollow of God's palm.

Both Markham and the psalmist find a place of peace and assurance amidst the storm. One cannot but think of the episode of Jesus in the storm on the Sea of Galilee, saying, "Peace, be still," as an acted poem of a similar nature. Jesus did not write poetry; he lived it.

Psalm 18, ascribed to David, is a striking description of a theophany. Earthquake and thunderstorm combine to do their worst, the thunderstorm being active only at the beginning and end of the poem. The massiveness of the clouds, the rapidity of the flight, the darkness, the pent-up waters in the heavens and the revels of the lightning, are all described with telling effect. Compare the translation of George Adam Smith with the Authorized Version.[2]

The Arabs delight in describing storms, but they do not interpret them as theophanies, as the Hebrews do.

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[1] Translation adapted from Gordon, Briggs, and J. M. P. Smith. Sirion is another name for Mt. Hermon. The Prologue of Goethe's *Faust* gives an echo of this psalm.

[2] G. A. Smith, *Early Religious Poetry of Israel,* pp. 57 f. The same description is given in II Samuel 22:7-12. Smith thinks the poem is very early.

The best-known Arabic poem with a storm for its subject is the Hymn of Imra-el-Kais:[3]

> Friend, thou seest the lightning. Mark where it wavereth,
> Gleaming like fingers twisted, clasped in the cloud rivers.
> Like a lamp new lighted, so is the flash of it,
> Trimmed by a hermit nightly pouring oil-sesame.

The account of the voice of God in the whirlwind in Job constitutes a magnificent nature poem. Read it first in the American Standard Version and then turn to the translation of Dr. Jastrow in his *Book of Job*. There is a psalm in Habakkuk which is more nearly like the earlier theophanies.

God in Nature

The Inner and the Outer Law, Psalm 19.
God's Control over Nature, Psalms 104 and 107.
A Song of Praise, Psalm 148.
The Song of Creation, Job 38.

The first half of the nineteenth Psalm, containing twelve lines, is claimed by some to be originally a Babylonian hymn to the Sun-god, which has been worked over by a monotheist to the praise of Yahweh. It seems to the author that this is a gratuitous assumption. It is possible that the first part was originally a separate song but it bears all the marks of genuine Hebrew poetry:

> The heavens declare the glory of God:
> And the firmament showeth his handiwork.
> Day unto day uttereth speech;
> And night to night showeth knowledge.
> In all the earth their voice is gone out,
> And their words to the end of the world.
> In them hath he set a tent for the sun.
> As a bridegroom going forth from his canopy.[4]

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[3] Imra-el-Kais at the close of his *Mu'allaka*. Blunt's translation is given here. For a complete translation see G. A. Smith, *Early Religious Poetry of Israel*, p. 59; or Warner's *Library of the World's Best Literature*, article "Arabic Poetry."

[4] Canopies were used at Jewish weddings.

He rejoiceth as a hero to run his course.
From the end of the heavens he setteth out,
And to the other end is his circuit,
And nothing can be hid from the heat.[5]

Then without a pause the poem bursts into a pæan of praise for the law, composed of one of the most beautiful series of parallels in Hebrew literature:

The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul:
The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple:
The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart:
The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes:
The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever:
The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

But the two parts are also combined into a larger unity. The first part portrays the law and order prevailing in the heavens above; the second part shows the beauty of the moral law reigning within the human heart. Kant also found a larger unity between the starry heavens above and the moral law within. The difference in meter sets the one off by contrast from the other, without upsetting the larger unity of the whole. In Chinese thought the Tao (*way* or *order*) of heaven is reflected as in a mirror in the Tao of man, and so harmony must be maintained between them. The same truth is expressed by Zoroaster:

He who first planned that these skies should be clothed with lights,
He by his wisdom is creator of righteousness, wherewith to support the best mind.[6]

The student will recall Addison's paraphrase of Psalm 19, in the hymn known as "The Spacious Firmament on High":

The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens a shining frame,
Their great original proclaim.

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[5] The rendering is after Kent and the *Expositor's Bible.*

[6] Yasna xxxi, 9, quoted from Moulton, *Literary Study of the Bible,* p. 100.

Th' unwearied sun from day to day
Does his creator's power display,
And publishes to every land
The work of an almighty hand.

. . . . .

In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice;
Forever singing as they shine:
The hand that made us is divine.

Psalm 148, which is a full diapason of praise of the Creator, is well translated in Gordon's *Poets of the Old Testament.* Psalm 102 closes with a strophe on God's power:

Of old Thou hast founded the earth,
  And the heavens are the work of Thy hands.
They shall perish but Thou shalt abide;
  As a garment shall all of them fade.
They shall change as a robe that Thou changest;
  But Thou art the same and Thy years have no end.[7]

Psalm 104 serves as a companion to one of the most beautiful personal psalms in the psalter, Psalm 103. Psalm 104 celebrates God's glory in creation, following apparently the creation story in Genesis 1. Its close affiliations with the Solar Hymn of Pharaoh Amenhotep IV indicate dependence, but the Jewish writer has so completely assimilated his material that it is a thoroughly convincing expression of the Israelite belief in a personal Creator. The student should examine the two, side by side.[8]

MODERN SONGS OF GOD IN NATURE

ALFRED NOYES, *Watchers of the Sky,* especially "Kepler" and "Newton."

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[7] A. R. Gordon, *Poets of the Old Testament,* p. 152.

[8] See J. H. Breasted, *A History of the Ancient Egyptians,* pp. 273-277, or his *Development of Religious Thought in Ancient Egypt,* pp. 324 f. Breasted prints Psalm 104 and Aton's Hymn side by side. The Solar Hymn may also be found in Barton, *Archæology and the Bible,* 3rd ed., pp. 402-406.

HILL, CAROLINE M., *The World's Great Religious Poetry,* Sec. V, "God in Nature."
BOURDILLON, "Light."
CARRUTH, W. H., "Each in His Own Tongue."
KABIR, "Songs of Kabir."
KILMER, J., "Trees."
GILMAN, CHARLOTTE P., "The Living God."
TAGORE, RABINDRANATH, "Autumn."
WATSON, WILLIAM, "God Seeking."

There is a wealth of material comparable to the psalms in modern poetry. It is a mistake to think that the tendency of modern science is wholly materialistic. The discovery of the new and the unexpected in the physical world simply draws attention more than ever to the limitations of our understanding and makes us feel with Tennyson that "as knowledge grows from more to more, will more of reverence in us dwell." The realization of scientists that the riddle of the universe still baffles us is well expressed in the words of Whetham, who is both a poet and a scientist:

We scatter the mists that enclose us
The seas are ours and the lands,
The quivering ether knows us
And carries our quick commands.
From the blaze of the sun's bright glory
We sift each ray of light:
And steal from the stars their story
Across the dark space of night.

But beyond the bright search-lights of science,
Out of sight of the windows of sense,
Old riddles still bid us defiance
Old questions of why and whence.
There fail all sure means of trial
And end all the pathways we've trod
Where man by belief or denial
Is weaving the purpose of God.[9]

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[9] Quoted from A. A. Noyes, President American Association for the Advancement of Science, in *Science,* Feb. 3, 1928, p. 110.

In the series of poems entitled *Watchers of the Sky,* Noyes celebrates the progress of astronomy from the days of Tycho Brahe to the present. These poems, which are trustworthy as to scientific fact, are couched in the language of the layman and are aflame with religious devotion. They should be studied in connection with the "Psalms of Nature." In his story of Kepler, Noyes writes:

This music leads us far
From all our creeds, except that faith in law.
Your quest for knowledge—how it rests on that!
How sure the soul is that if truth destroy
The temple, in three days the truth will build
A nobler temple; and that order reigns
In all things. Even your atheist builds his doubt
On that strange faith; destroys this heaven and God
In absolute faith that his own thought is true
To law, God's lanthorn to our stumbling feet;
And so, despite himself, he worships God,
For where true souls are, there are God and heaven.

"It is an ancient wisdom. Long ago,"
Said Kepler, under the glittering Eastern sky,
The shepherd king looked up at those great stars,
Those ordered hosts, and cried *Cœli narrant*
Gloriam Dei!

The following is from the poem on "Newton":

This universe
Exists, and by that one impossible fact
Declares itself a miracle; postulates
An infinite power within itself, a Whole
Greater than any part, a Unity
Sustaining all, binding all worlds in one.
This is the mystery, palpable here and now.

The reader should begin to make a collection of his own of poems presenting as many conceptions of nature and its relation to God as possible, ranging from the transcendental point of view of the Hebrews to modern immanence and oriental pantheism.

2. FAITH AND TRUST

This section will be devoted to those more personal songs of faith and trust, of confession and penitence and hope and love, which make up the major portion of the psalms. Some of these psalms are so familiar that we need not give as much attention to them as to those less well known.

The Shepherd Psalm, Psalm 23

The shepherd simile runs through our whole religious thinking. Some have thought that the shepherd figure is kept up only in the first half of the psalm and that the last half pictures a banquet scene. It is best, however, to hold to the shepherd figure throughout, interpreting the "table in the presence of mine enemies" as the feeding of the sheep with their animal foes impotently looking on. The psalm is full of allusions to the providence of the shepherd in his care of the sheep.

Different writers have devised different arrangements for this psalm. Moulton[10] calls it an example of the envelope figure, the three strophes of four lines each supplying the body of the psalm. Some divide it into two stanzas, others into three. The King James Version is so well beloved that it is best to use that translation, but others should be consulted.

The eighth Psalm is a poetic echo of the creation story. The wonders of creation and the greatness of God are its theme, both of which make room as a corollary for the dignity of man as the son of God, to whom has been given dominion over the works of creation.

The psalm consists of a refrain at the beginning and the close, and four strophes of four lines each in trimeter measure. It is set to the *Gittith* or harvest tune. We quote the two middle stanzas only:

[10] R. G. Moulton, *The Literary Study of the Bible*, p. 58.

When I consider the heavens the work of Thy fingers,
The moon and the stars which Thou hast formed;
What is man that Thou art mindful of him?
And the son of man, that Thou visitest him?

For Thou hast made him but little lower than God,
And crownest him with glory and honor,
Thou makest him to have dominion over the work of Thy hands;
Thou hast put all things under his feet.

Sophocles, in the midst of the Periclean age, expressed the Greek view of the dignity and achievements of man in the famous chorus of *Antigone:*[11]

> Of all strong things none is more wonderfully strong than man. He can cross the wintry sea, and year by year compels with his plow the unwearied strength of the Earth, the oldest of the immortal gods. He seizes for his prey the aery birds and the teeming fishes, and with his wit has tamed the mountain-ranging beasts, the long-maned horses and the tireless bull. Language is his and windswift thought and city-founding mind; he has learnt to shelter himself from cold and piercing rain; and has devices to meet every ill save death alone. Even for desperate sickness he has a cure, and with his boundless skill he moves on, sometimes to evil but then again to good.

It is worth noting that in the history of the human spirit the Hebrews were the first people to become conscious of the spiritual powers of man, and the Greeks first to realize the extent of his practical gifts. These two concepts of man's dignity when united supply an adequate foundation for supreme achievement. Certainly no eulogies of these kindred forms of dignity that have come down to us from the ancient world can compare with those of the psalmist and of Sophocles, indeed, none from any age until the coming of Shakespeare.[12]

At a still later date Shelley adds his panegyric in the *Prometheus Unbound:*[13]

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[11] Sophocles, *Antigone,* lines 331-350.
[12] *Hamlet,* Act II, scene 2, lines 316 f.
[13] Percy B. Shelley, *Prometheus Unbound,* "Song of the Earth," Act. IV.

Language is a perpetual orphic song,
Which rules with dædal harmony a throng
Of thoughts and forms, which else senseless and shapeless were.
The lightning is his slave; heaven's utmost deep
Gives up her stars and like a flock of sheep
They pass before his eye, are numbered and roll on!
The tempest is his steed, he strides the air;
And the abyss shouts from her depths laid bare,
Heaven, hast thou secrets? Man unveils; I have none.

Time and Eternity, Psalm 90

This is one of the psalms used by the soldiers of Cromwell on Marston Field when they fell to singing psalms. As his soldiers bore the body of John Hampden, who was wounded on June 18, 1643, and died six days later, through the beech-woods of Buckinghamshire they chanted this psalm, and since 1662 it has had a place in the burial service of the Prayer Book. Cardinal Newman in his *Dream of Gerontius* depicts the souls within the golden prison breaking into a solemn chanting of the first four stanzas of this psalm as the soul of Gerontius is placed in temporary charge of the angels of purgatory. Thus the psalm came to be called "the dirge of the world in sad and stately music." But it is not so much a funeral hymn as a statement of a noble philosophy of life. Gladstone said, "The Ninetieth Psalm is perhaps the most sublime of human composition, the deepest in feeling, the loftiest in theological conception, the most magnificent in its imagery."

The setting of this poem is a mountain solitude. During the last phases of the night the poet may have been on watch in the midst of massive walls of rock, of deep clefts, and of desert distances, waiting for the dawning light. Soon its first shafts penetrate into the clefts, the desert reflects the brilliance of the morning light, the grass blooms in the freshness while it lasts and then withers. All too quickly the shadows flee and the sun scorches; the day goes the way of the world and the poet is impressed with the shortness of time and the greatness of eternity. Unchanging as the mountains and rocks seem, behind them is the eternal and unchanging God, in comparison with whom they are but for a time.

Although this psalm was attributed to Moses it is much later than his time. It is composed of seven stanzas with a varied number of lines and measures. The last strophe was perhaps a liturgical addition inserted for use in the Temple ritual. We are here giving the Authorized Version with a few changes:

Lord Thou hast been our dwelling-place
In all generations.
Before the mountains were brought forth,
Or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.

Thou turnest man back to dust,
And sayest, Return ye children of men.
For a thousand years in Thy sight
Are but as yesterday when it is past.
As a watch in the night Thou dost flood them away.[14]

In the morning they are like the grass which groweth up,
In the evening it is cut down and withereth.
For we are consumed in Thine anger,
And in Thy wrath are we troubled.
Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee,
Our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance.

For all our days do decline;
And in Thy wrath we bring our years to an end.
As a sigh are the days of our years,
And in their breadth is travail and trouble,
For it is soon gone and we fly away.

Who knoweth the power of Thine anger,
Or can number the awful deeds of Thy wrath!
So teach us to number our days,
That we may get a mind of wisdom.
Return, O Lord, how long?

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[14] I.e., the years.

Be sorry for Thy servants.
O satisfy us in the morning with Thy kindness,
That we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
Make us glad according to the days that Thou hast afflicted us,
And the years wherein we have seen evil.
Let Thy work appear unto thy servants,
And Thy glory unto Thy children,
And let the beauty of the Lord God be upon us;
And establish Thou the work of our hands upon us;
Yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it.[15]

The above psalm exhibits a steady movement in the progress of its thought. From God's eternity the poet passes to man's transitoriness and frailty, and their source in his sin and lack of harmony with God. Then follows an earnest prayer of an honest soul, the answer to which God has already in waiting. The psalm closes with a plea that God will establish even the works of man and straighten out this twisted world.

The psalm voices a philosophy which embraces both time and eternity. The poet seems to conceive men, the years, and the objects of time all passing in procession before God. One is reminded of Lorado Taft's sculptured group where Time is seated upon a throne before which men pass from birth to death in parade. Time is unchanging, but all else changes, decays, and vanishes as it passes by. From the thought of man's transitoriness either of two philosophies may originate. The one is "Eat, drink, and be merry to-day for to-morrow ye die," and the other is "So teach us to number our days that we may get us an heart of wisdom." The psalmist differs widely from the lover of pleasure. He would say to us, "We have but one life here, and what comes after it we cannot with certainty tell; but it pays no matter what comes after it, to try to do things, to accomplish things in this life, and not merely to have a soft and pleasant time."

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[15] The changes and omissions are based on suggestions of the *International Critical Commentary*.

O Gentlemen, the time of life is short;
To spend that shortness basely were too long.
—Harry Hotspur.

The Searching of God, Psalm 139

This psalm blends two contrasted thoughts into a unified whole. It is a lyric of fifty-two lines divided into two equal stanzas. In the first part the thought of God's omniscience is a source of dread; it is too wonderful for the poet and he seeks to escape from it. In the second part this searching of God into every corner, both within his being and without, remains all-embracing, but he comes to the conclusion that only because of God's wonderful knowledge thus acquired can He bestow that care of which he now stands in sore need:

O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me!
Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising,
Thou understandest my thought afar off.
Thou searchest out my path and my lying down,
And art acquainted with all my ways.

. . . . .

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
It is high, I cannot attain unto it.
Whither shall I go from Thy spirit?
Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?
If I ascend up into heaven Thou art there:
If I make my bed in Sheol behold thou art there:
If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
Even there shall Thy hand lead me,
And Thy right hand shall hold me.

Just as the searching knowledge of God extends through space so does it endure through time, and finally the psalmist's thought goes back to his birth (lines 25 and 26):

For thou didst create my vitals
Thou didst fashion me in my mother's womb.

At this point comes the turning in thought. He realizes that without God's presence he could not even have been born, so joyfully he sings:

I will give thanks unto Thee:
For I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
Wonderful are Thy works,
And that my soul knoweth right well.
My bones were not hidden from Thee,
When I was made in secret.

. . . . .

How precious are Thy thoughts unto me, O God!
How great is the sum of them!
Were I to count them—they would outnumber the sands!
Were I to come to the end of them,
My life spand must be like Thine!

. . . . .

Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me and know my thoughts;
And see if there be any false way in me;
And lead me in the way everlasting.[16]

The antithesis has been resolved and the psalmist has not only become willing for God to search him through and through but prays for such searching.

The modern world has produced a spirit akin to that of the psalmist in Francis Thompson, whose own *Via Dolorsa* is epitomized in one of the most remarkable poems in our language, "The Hound of Heaven."[17] In their search for reality men in the later nineteenth century were impelled by cosmic forces to push out on to the frontiers of experience. It was not so much that they were experimenting with life as that some Power higher than they was experimenting with them. Thompson had suffered much at the hands of the world. He did not defy it; he transcended it by placing his poverty beneath his contempt. After he had thus extracted its sting he sought the fuller life in the kingdom of his own mind where at last he found the Kingdom of God. The eternal malady of the spirit is its mistaken search for satisfaction in things known and seen, in its age-long quest for peace and joy on the fringe of life rather than at its heart and center in God.

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[16] The Revised Version has been used with changes suggested by the *American Translation,* J. M. P. Smith, editor.

[17] Francis Thompson, *Poems,* New York, 1913. Also in Hill, *The World's Great Religious Poetry,* pp. 45-49.

> I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
> I fled Him down the arches of the years;
> I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
> Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears
> I hid from Him and under running laughter.
> Up vistaed hopes I sped;
> And shot, precipitated,
> Adown titanic glooms of chasmèd fears,
> From those strong feet that followed, followed after.
> And with unhurrying chase,
> And unperturbèd pace,
> Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
> They beat, and a voice beat
> More instant than the Feet—
> "All things betray thee, who betrayest Me."

He tried everything—nature, little children, love—all things, only to find that in the absence of contact with the Searcher there was no satisfaction, until at last the Voice said:

> "I am He Whom thou seekest!
> Thou dravest love from thee who dravest Me."

The Great Confession, Psalm 51; compare Psalm 32

Tradition has assigned this psalm to David on the assumption that it was occasioned by his sin with Bathsheba. But its general tone reflects rather the subdued and sorrowful mood of the Exile, and its accents of penitence are similar in tenor to those of Ezekiel and the Second Isaiah. It is probably a confession of community sin. The exiled people felt that their captivity was a merited punishment for their common sin, a sin against God who, to discipline them, had permitted the nations to take them captive. Verse 4 voices the realization that God is justified in his dealings with Israel and that she ought not to retain any bitter feelings against Him. But though it is a community confession, each member takes it as intensely personal to himself and thus it has become the world's best known confessional song. The Hebrews knew what it meant both to confess sin and to be forgiven. The surpassing relief of forgiveness is a constant note in their religious meditations.

There is no trace of any sacrificial cult or of any dependence upon ritual in this psalm. The influence of the great prophets and their demand for righteous living as the only way to please God is clearly evident. The poem gives a profound analysis of sin, of the human conscience, and of access to God to be obtained through repentance. The author first faces the fact of his sin without evasion or excuse; he finds the trouble to be within himself and seeks peace by returning to God. He knows that there can be no cure without the healing touch of God's presence. The pregnant phrases in which these abiding realities find expression still move men to repentance and lead them to seek peace and assurance in communion with God.

The Goodness of God, Psalm 103

This psalm is sometimes called the "Old Scottish Communion Hymn." It is one of the classics of our King James Version which might well be committed to memory. Later translations have changed its phrasing but little. It is one of the noblest expressions of the love of God in all literature. Its companion is Psalm 104 and they should be read together. The last four verses may have been added at a later date to make it more suitable for Temple worship.

Songs of Trust, Psalms 91 and 46

Psalm 91 is a jubliant song of trust, and a fine example of the religious attitude of the Jewish people. It assures men that the best way to make use of their freedom is to enter into the secret dwelling-place of God and abide there. A relationship can be established with God such that fellowship shall be not intermittent but constant. Synonyms for living quarters, such as "dwelling-place," "habitation," and "secret place" recur. Dr. Briggs' substitute translation for "the secret of the Lord" is "the intimacy of the Lord have they." Scotch peasants refer to the front room of their homes as "but" and to the living room as "ben." Casual visitors are received into the "but" whereas intimate friends are invited into the "ben." With this custom in mind Ian MacLaren, in *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush,* referring to one of the saints of the kirk, said that he was "far ben" with God. This psalm pictures the truly religious soul as "far ben" with God.

The psalm is dramatic in form, perhaps so written with a view to its use for antiphonal singing. It is given here in the Authorized Version, with verse 8 omitted:

First voice

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress,
My God; in Him will I trust.

Second voice

Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler,
And from the noisome pestilence.
He shall cover thee with His feathers,
And under His wings shalt thou trust.
His truth shall be thy shield and buckler.
Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night;
Nor for the arrow that flieth by day;
Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness;

Nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.
A thousand shall fall at thy side,
And ten thousand at thy right hand;
But it shall not come nigh thee.

First voice

For Thou, Lord, art my refuge.

Second voice

Thou hast made the Most High thy habitation.
There shall no evil befall thee,
Neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.
For he shall give his angels charge over thee,
To keep thee in all thy ways,
They shall bear thee up in their hands,
Lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.
Thou shalt tread upon the serpent and the adder;
The young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

The voice of God

Because he hath set his love upon Me,
Therefore will I deliver him;
I will set him on high because he hath known My name.
He shall call on Me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble;
I will deliver him and honor him,
With long life will I satisfy him,
And show him My salvation.[18]

Psalm 46 is another song of security. Luther's hymn, "*Ein Feste Burg*" ("A Mighty Fortress"), is based upon it.

FOR STUDY AND COMPARISON

BHAGAVAD, GITA, "Sanyaya," *Harvard Classics,* Vol. XLV, p. 847.
BRYANT, W. C., "To a Waterfowl."
CLEANTHES, "Hymn to Zeus."
HERBERT, GEORGE, "The Pulley."
ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON, "In Memoriam."
SENECA, "The End of Being."

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[18] We are indebted for this arrangement to Laura Wild, *A Literary Guide to the Bible,* p. 188.

TAGORE, RABINDRANATH, "Gitanjali."
WHITTIER, JOHN G., "The Eternal Goodness."

See also, for various religious lyrics, Caroline M. Hill's *The World's Great Religious Poetry,* Sec. IV, "Faith."

The reader will find the time spent in browsing among the great religious poems of all times and peoples richly rewarding. If practicable he should make up a list of poems of his own on the various themes for study and comparison. We may fittingly close this section with a poem of Seneca's, entitled "The End of Being":[19]

The end of being is to find out God!
And what is God? A vast almighty Power
Great and unlimited whose potent will
Brings to achievement whatso'er He please.
He is all mind. His being infinite,—
All that we see and all that we do not see.
The Lord of Heaven and earth, the God of Gods.
Without Him nothing is. Yet what He is
We know not! When we strive to comprehend
Our feeble guesses leave the most concealed.
To Him we owe all good we call our own,
To Him we live, to Him ourselves approve.
He is a friend forever at our side.
What cares He for the bleeding sacrifice?
O purge your hearts and lead the life of good!
Not in the pride of temples made with stone
His pleasure lies but in the piety
Of consecrated hearts and lives devout.

3. SONGS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Even though Goethe called Christianity the "religion of sorrow," we agree rather with Fosdick that the New Testament is the "most joyful book in the world." It opens with a song of joy over the birth of Jesus and closes with hymns of Hallelujah sung by the uncounted hosts of the redeemed in heaven. We find the followers of Jesus undaunted in every trial which they are called upon to bear, even unto death, and bidding one another to rejoice in Christ their Lord. But this spirit of the disciples finds its expression mainly in prose; there are only a few snatches of song in the entire book. Though this religion is preëminently lyrical in tone, prose is the medium of its evangel. The apostles preached the good news, wrote in defense of their faith, and recorded its history in compact and pungent prose for a critical world to pass judgment upon. They sang their songs in their homes and secluded places of worship.

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[19] Quoted from Caroline M. Hill, *The World's Great Religious Poetry,* p. 85.

Yet Luke contains some of the finest music of our Christian heritage. He has preserved several songs pertaining to the birth of Jesus, the first of which is the *Magnificat* of Mary in Luke 1:46-55. Mary, greeted by Elizabeth as the most favored of women, sings:

My heart extols the Lord,
My spirit exults in God my Savior.
For He has noticed his slave in her humble station,
For from this time all the ages will think me favored!

For the Almighty has done wonders for me,
How holy His name is!
He shows His mercy age after age
To those who fear Him.

He has done mighty deeds with His arm,
He has routed the proud-minded,
He has dethroned monarchs and exalted the poor,
He has satisfied the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty-handed.

He has helped his servant Israel,
Remembering his mercy,
As he promised our forefathers
To have mercy on Abraham and his descendants forever! [20]

The *Benedictus* of Zechariah is found in Luke 1:68-79:

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[20] This translation and that of the *Benedictus* are from Goodspeed's New Testament. It is well to compare them with the other versions. Compare also Hannah's song of praise over the birth of Samuel, I Samuel 2:1-10.

Blessings on the Lord, the God of Israel,
Because he has turned His attention to His people,
  and brought about their deliverance,
And He has produced a mighty savior for us
In the house of his servant David.

By the lips of His prophets He promised of old to do this—
To save us from our enemies and from the hands of all who hate us.
Thus showing mercy to our fathers,
And keeping His sacred covenant,

And the oath that He swore to our forefather Abraham,
That we should be delivered from the hands of our enemies,
And should serve Him in holiness and uprightness, unafraid,
In His own presence all our lives.

And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High,
For you will go before the Lord to make His way ready,
Bringing His people the knowledge of salvation
Through the forgiveness of their sins.

Because the heart of our God is merciful,
And so the day will dawn upon us from on high,
To shine on men who sit in darkness and the shadow of death,
And guide our feet in the way of peace.

The *Gloria in Excelsis* is the song of the angels on the night of the Nativity:

Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace,
Among men in whom he is well pleased.

The last of these songs which celebrate the birth of Jesus is that of Simeon, the *Nunc Dimittis*, in Luke 2:29-31:

Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart, O Lord,
  According to Thy word, in peace;
For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,
  Which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples;
A light for revelation to the Gentiles,
  And the glory of Thy people Israel.

These songs will always be accorded an honored place in the chants of the church. Together with the stories in which they are set they have been the source of inspiration for numerous cantatas and oratorios. Among the more famous of these is Bach's "The Christmas Oratorio." Many hymns have been written around them, such as "Holy Night," "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear," "*Adeste Fideles*," and "O Little Town of Bethlehem."

The Hymn of Love, I Corinthians 13

This lyric of love refuses to be confined within the bounds of prose. When the apostle had risen to the highest summit of feeling he reverted to the rhythmical form native to his race. Although the song was written in Greek it observes the characteristic Hebrew principle of parallelism. Harnack's arrangement possesses the stately movement and rhythm of a hymn.[21] The language of the chapter is marked by a natural rhythm, is charmingly spontaneous, and the words accommodate themselves to the thought. This has been said to be the "greatest, strongest, and deepest thing Paul ever wrote," and assuredly it is one of the immortal lyrics of all time. Harnack calls it "The Hymn of Heavenly Love," and at the close of his discussion he urges his reader to "Pursue love; hunt it as a hunter seeks his prey, determined to get it." Though Paul was the Apostle of Faith he gives love chief place as the greatest thing in life. For him Christ was love and this is a picture of love incarnate.

The translation in the American Revision is unsurpassed in poetic beauty. Compare it with verses 4-8*a* in Moffatt's translation:

> Love is very patient, very kind.
> Love knows no jealousy;
> Love makes no parade, gives itself no airs,
> Is never rude, never selfish,
> Never irritated, never resentful;

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[21] Adolf Harnack, "The Hymn of Heavenly Love," *Expositor*, May and June, 1912. See also Henry Drummond, *The Greatest Thing in the World.*

Love is never glad when others go wrong,
Love is always gladdened by goodness,
Always slow to expose,
Always eager to believe the best,
Always hopeful, always patient.
Love never disappears.

Compare Richard Watson Gilder's presentation of the same thought in his lyric, "After Song":

Through love to light, O wonderful the way
That leads from darkness to the perfect day!
From darkness and from sorrow to the perfect night,
To morning that comes singing o'er the sea.
Through love to light! Through light, O God, to Thee,
Who art the love of love, the Eternal light of light.

Discussion Topics and Exercises

1. Select and study fifteen poems which are meditations on nature. Analyze the views of God and nature which they present. Some of these should be taken from other than Christian sources.
2. Make a list of fifteen religious lyrics voicing faith in God.
3. Make your own list of the cantatas, oratorios, and hymns in which the songs of the New Testament figure or which they have inspired.
4. Does the pantheistic view of nature and the world evoke as deep poetic feeling as the theistic view?
5. Has the modern study of science enriched or impoverished the wells of poetic feeling?

Books to Consult

The reader is referred to the bibliography of Chapter VIII.

CHAPTER X

SONGS OF HOPE

1. THE MESSIANIC IDEAL

MOST ancient peoples believed that the ideal or Golden Age lay behind them in the past. The Egyptians thought the ancient reign of Ra was this age of perfection. Hesiod divided the history of the world into four ages in a line of gradual descent: the ages of Gold, Silver, Iron, and Bronze. Plato conceived of cosmic life as divided into cycles of seventy-two thousand years each. In the first half when mankind had come fresh from the hands of the gods all was ideal, but in the last half things grew worse and worse. The Babylonians, Persians and other peoples of southwestern Asia believed that in the distant past men and gods lived happily on one or another mountain peak or in an idyllic garden. The Garden of Eden story is the Hebrew version of this ancient belief.

Most of the peoples of antiquity could see little but despair ahead of them. It remained for such prophets as the Second Isaiah and Ezekiel to reverse this tendency and in the midst of evil conditions to maintain the belief that a better social order was in store for Israel. For the most part such ancient peoples as did dwell longingly on the hope of a Golden Age to come, conceived it in terms of the past, for example, as an idyllic garden. But for the great Jewish prophets the symbol of the ideal was a city of the future, a New Jerusalem, which was a highly developed social and ethical concept.

The preëxilic prophets were the first Hebrew thinkers to frame a philosophy of history. Their conception of the national destiny could be expressed in simple and definite terms. God had chosen Israel as his peculiar people, and had covenanted with them to be their God to the end that they should bring righteousness to all peoples. Throughout their history God had done his part to keep this covenant. Their leaders were to be the servants of Yahweh and their kings his chosen ones; his was the ultimate sovereignty, and service in behalf of his purpose was the reason for their existence.

But two stern facts had to be reckoned with: first, the sin and idolatry of the people by which the covenant had been broken and Yahweh offended; and secondly, the fact that the nation was surrounded by world empires to whose kings Israel was forced to pay unwilling tribute. Why God's people should for centuries suffer oppression at the hands of ungodly and cruel nations, constituted one of the most difficult problems imaginable, and the solution of this problem was the heroic task to which the prophets set themselves.

The earlier prophets had said in explanation that the nation had sinned and that God was punishing her for it. Amos and Hosea, Micah and Isaiah vehemently denounced the triple sin of Israel, idolatry, pride, and injustice. The people had forsaken Yahweh and gone after other gods, they had become wealthy and acquired that pride which goeth before a fall, they had practiced extortion upon the peasant and swindled the widow. But while God was punishing them for it neither would His mercy forsake them nor His love fail them if they would confess and repent of their sins and begin to walk in the way of righteousness and justice. To carry on this discipline God used nations who did not recognize nor respect Him, but if these nations should attempt to obliterate Israel He would pull them short as with an iron bit in their mouths; they were merely instruments in His hands and their oppression of His people must end when His purpose was served.

Meanwhile the long drawn out years of suffering continued. The empires grew more arrogant in power and treated Israel with increasing severity. In 586 B.C. a series of attacks upon Jerusalem culminated in its almost total destruction. Its best people were carried away into captivity in Babylon and the thread of the national life was broken. Instead of a nation Israel was now a community living on foreign soil, dependent upon its own heroic past and its vivid hope of emancipation for its spiritual sustenance. At such a time lesser men would in despair have called their day the "Age of Iron." But the catastrophe did not shatter the faith of the prophets; it merely gave it new form and content. Ezekiel and the Second Isaiah, as well as other prophets and teachers, out of a patriotic desire to do their countrymen a service, set themselves to developing the spiritual life of the community. The Exile gave birth to the synagogue and its far-reaching program of education. During this period its teachers assembled their national literature and turned it into a great creative social force. The prophets taught a new conception of God in more universal and spiritual terms. Thus the Exile became an invaluable chapter in the spiritual training of Israel.

During the Exile the prophets also worked out a more elaborate and definite program of final redemption. The purpose of God demanded more time for its fulfillment than their fathers had supposed, but it had not failed. In due season the dead nation would be raised to life, the Holy City would arise from its ashes, and the Temple would be rebuilt. The community now in captivity would return to its homeland to live under ideal conditions which could only be described as a new heaven and a new earth. A new ruler would be assigned to them, a Prince of the House of David, a servant of the people. They would then be gathered together by him under the banner of Yahweh and would succeed in overthrowing their enemies. Later an indefinite date for this glad consummation came to be fixed—a time unknown to them but quite clear in the mind of God—a "Day of Yahweh," when the wicked would flee from sight and the righteous would prosper in a land of their own.

The Exile was officially ended by a Persian decree in 538 B.C., which permitted the Jews to return to Jerusalem. They began slowly to sift back into Palestine to undertake the rehabilitation of the city and the rebuilding of the Temple. Zerubbabel was their first governor and under his rule the Temple was rededicated in 516 B.C. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah firmly believed that under this governor, who was a scion of the house of David, the popular hopes of national glory would be realized. At Zechariah's suggestion a crown was prepared for Zerubbabel, but history is silent as to whether it was ever placed on his head. At any rate their bright expectations met with disappointment and many prophets then began to look to direct divine intervention for their realization.

From time to time notes of a higher ethical strain are heard in the songs of hope from this period. One of the noblest of these voices came from the community in captivity, purged by its suffering. The Second Isaiah was the first to proclaim Israel's world-wide mission to humanity. He declared that the restoration of the nation was sure of accomplishment, not because of Israel's deserts nor even of Yahweh's promises, but because the nation was needed to carry the knowledge of God to all humanity. He pictured in immortal colors the afflicted nation as Yahweh's Suffering Servant (Isaiah 53). With divine insight he interpreted the glorified meaning of suffering when voluntarily and nobly borne and instructed the nation that only through such an interpretation could the sting be removed from humiliation. In him messianic prophecy in the broader sense touched its peak.

Various views and shades of belief were current concerning the character of the new age. According to one view it was to be inaugurated by a final day of judgment and its duration was to be eternal upon this earth. This is the view expressed in Daniel and Ethiopic Enoch 1-36, and it prevailed up to the close of the second century before Christ. These writers told of a land of peace and plenty and a perpetual reign of good will. But by the beginning of the last century of the pre-Christian era, owing to the disappointments which the pious had suffered from its repeated postponement and the vogue of the non-Jewish idea, recently adopted, that matter was essentially evil, the conviction had gained ground that no rule upon this earth could be both permanent and righteous. Hence some writers began to declare that the duration of the messianic kingdom would be temporary and that the goal of their hopes was not that transitory kingdom but heaven itself.[1] The judgment at the beginning of the messianic age on earth would only be a preliminary of the final judgment which would take place at its close. There were also a few others who abandoned the idea of a temporary kingdom on this earth altogether and pinned their hopes on a new heaven and a new earth of eternal duration.[2] Some of these writers taught that the present heavens and earth were to be superseded by the creation of a new order which was to be one of "eternal blessing and light." Thus on almost every point opinions varied somewhat, but there was substantial agreement by the beginning of the Christian era that in the not distant future a Messiah would appear, that he would gather back home the Jews in other lands, overthrow the enemies of Israel, glorify Jerusalem, renew the entire world, and establish a rule of righteousness. Some (notably the Pharisees) believed that the pious dead of former generations would rise to participate in the new age. While some of the passages which deal with these expectations are vindictive in spirit many others are full of unselfish devotion.

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[1] See Ethiopic Enoch 91-104 and Psalms of Solomon 1-16. Substantially the same view occurs in the Book of Jubilees, II Baruch, and the Assumption of Moses. See R. H. Charles, *Eschatology,* p. 200; C. C. McCown, *The Promise of His Coming,* p. 123

[2] Ethiopic Enoch 1-36; Isaiah 65:17; 66:22.

The root meaning of the word *apocalyptic* is "to take off the veil," that is, to reveal things which hitherto have been hidden from human insight. The word *eschatological* is from the Greek *eschata,* meaning "the last things." These words are continually used in discussing the coming of the new age, the resurrection, and the final judgment. Many of the writers refer to the "present age" and the "age to come," and under these two terms comprehend all time, past and future. Daniel is the best example of apocalyptic in the Jewish Bible, and Revelation is the finest literature of this hope in the early Christian church. There were other great Jewish apocalypses which failed to gain a place in the Scripture canon. Ethiopic Enoch, The Assumption of Moses, The Apocalypse of Baruch, The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, are the most important of these. The apocaliptic books generally are pseudonymous.

Apocalypse has been defined as the "resurgence of prophecy." Dr. Charles is more correct, we think, in saying that it served as an inferior substitute. As the spirit of prophecy waned scribism arose, and when religious hopes sought vent once more they did so not in writings like those of Hosea and Isaiah but in the form of apocalypse. These apocalypses were written in times of trouble by men who paid for them with their blood. They are full of symbolism and imagery, in which each figure is made to represent some individual or institution of the contemporary world. The scene of their whole movement of thought is a higher world-order in which a drama of events about to break upon the earth is being prepared. God is holy and just, but an absentee God who permits evil to do its work until the hour strikes in which he will pronounce its doom. For the prophets God is the nation's chief ally, but it must get back upon its own feet and work out its own salvation. So desperate has the plight of their nation grown in the opinion of the writers of the apocalypses that the only thing which can be done is to sit down and wait patiently for the coming of the Messiah to their rescue.

Many of the pious Jews in the centuries just preceding the Christian era felt themselves somewhat in the position of Elsa, who, in Wagner's *Lohengrin,* comes into the royal presence "clad in white with sad and resigned demeanor and attempting no defense." She can only hug her dream to her bosom and declare that a knight in shining armor and with a golden sword and crown is going to come to her aid from heaven. "That knight will I await," is her answer to King Henry, "he shall my champion be." So those Jews who were devoted to the apocalypses looked for the coming of the Messiah.

2. SELECTIONS OF SONGS

The Prince of Peace, Isaiah 9:2-7
The Ideal Ruler, Isaiah 11:1-10

In 701 B.C. Sennacherib, King of Assyria, invaded Palestine, devastated the land and captured many of the villages and finally demanded of Jerusalem its surrender. At this crisis Isaiah rose to the height of his great conviction and declared that Assyria had gone beyond Yahweh's commission to act as the disciplinarian of Israel and had become intolerably arrogant. Yahweh would now protect his people and city. Then the incredible happened. Decimation by a pestilence in the lowlands near Egypt did compel the army of Sennacherib to march away.

In great joy over this deliverance from the Assyrian oppressor Isaiah describes the gladness of the people in their new liberty and foretells in beautiful and melodious words the coming of the ideal king who will bring in the Golden Age:[8]

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light,
  on them that dwelt in the land of deep gloom has the light shined.
Thou hast multiplied gladness, increased joy,
  they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest,
  as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

. . . .

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given;
  and the government shall be upon his shoulder:
And his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor,
  Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Great shall be the government, and of peace there shall be no end,
  upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom,
To establish it and uphold it
  with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even forever.
The zeal of Yahweh of hosts will perform this.

The character of his rule is pictured in Isaiah 11:1-9:

And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse,
  and a branch out of its roots shall bear fruit.
And the spirit of Yahweh shall rest upon him,
  the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The spirit of counsel and might,
  the spirit of knowledge and the fear of Yahweh.
He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes,
  neither decide after the hearing of his ears;
But with righteousness shall he judge the poor,
  And decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
And he shall smite the tyrant with the rod of his mouth
  and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.
And righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist,
  and faithfulness the girdle of his loins.

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[8] Translation and date are according to J. A. Bewer, *Literature of the Old Testament,* p. 114. J. M. P. Smith, *The Prophets and Their Times,* p. 204, places these two messianic oracles in the time of Zerubbabel, after the rebuilding of the Temple. Zerubbabel (Smith says) is the ruler glorified (he was an actual descendant of David). Verse 6*a* is translated, "For a child has been born to us, a son has been given to us."

And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb
  and the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
And the calf and the lion and the fatling together;
  and a little child shall lead them.
And the cow and the bear shall feed,
  and their young ones shall lie down together;
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox,
  and the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp,
  and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.
They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain,
  for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Yahweh,
  as the waters cover the sea.[4]

The Ideal of World Justice, Isaiah 2:2-4; cf. Micah 4:1-4

As Isaiah's vision expanded its scope he saw the nations of the world coming to Mt. Zion to learn of this king the ways of righteousness and peace:

And it shall come to pass in the latter days
  that the mountain of Yahweh's house shall be established
On the top of the mountains,
  and shall be exalted above the hills.
And the nations shall flow unto it,
  and many peoples shall go and say,
"Come ye and let us go to the mountain of Yahweh,
  to the house of the God of Jacob;
And He will teach us of his ways,
  and we will walk in His paths!"

For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
  and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem.
And He will judge between the nations,
  and will decide concerning many peoples;
And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares,
  and their spears into pruning hooks;
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
  neither shall they learn war anymore.[5]

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[4] Translation from J. A. Bewer, *The Literature of the Old Testament,* p. 115. Compare also J. M. P. Smith, *The Prophets and Their Times,* p. 205, and consult other translations. See Micah 5:2-4 for another poem in which this ruler is referred to as coming forth out of Beth-ephrata (Bethlehem), the passage quoted in Matthew 2:6.

[5] *Ibid.,* p. 116.

The first reaction of the exiles to the destruction of Jerusalem and the tragedy of the Captivity was one of unrelieved despair. But time was destined to dispel the worst of their gloom. There arose among them a young man whom we call the "Great Unknown" or the "Second Isaiah," who became imbued with the fundamental prophetic conviction that Yahweh was the God of all nations and the arbiter of all peoples. In the victorious onward march of Cyrus, the great Persian empire-builder, he saw God at work and began to proclaim the deliverance of his people and the restoration of their city. This message he gave with a poet's vision and in a poet's words:

> Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people,
> says your God.
> Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem,
> and cry unto her,
> That her warfare is accomplished,
> that her iniquity is pardoned,
> That she has received double of Yahweh's hand,
> double for all her sins.
>
> Hark! one is crying, "In the wilderness
> prepare ye the way of Yahweh;
> Make level in the desert
> a highway for our God!
> Every valley shall be exalted,
> and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
> And the uneven shall be made level,
> and the rough places a plain:
> And the glory of Yahweh shall be revealed,
> and all flesh shall see it together. (Isaiah 40:1-11.) [6]

In succeeding chapters he sings of the unity and power of God, the short-lived existence of nations, the love of Mother Zion for her children, and the ultimate salvation of the world through Israel. Better than anyone else in Israel he solved the problem of harmonizing the two ideas of God, first as the covenanted God of Israel and secondly as the universal God of the world, by his clear perception of the truth that Israel was a chosen instrument through whom salvation should come to all nations. This profound truth is clearly and beautifully expressed in Isaiah 52:13-53:12:

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[6] Translation from J. A. Bewer, *Literature of the Old Testament,* pp. 200 f.

Yahweh speaks

Lo! my servant shall triumph,
He shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high.

. . . .

The nations speak

Who could have believed what we have heard?
And the arm of the Lord—to whom has it been revealed?
For he grew up like a sapling before us,
Like a root out of dry ground;
He had no form nor charm that we should look upon him,
No appearance, that we should desire him.
He was despised, and avoided by men,
A man afflicted with pains, and familiar with sickness;
And like one from whom men hide their faces,
He was despised and we took no account of him.

Yet it was our sicknesses that he bore,
Our pains that he carried;
While we accounted him stricken,
Smitten by God and humbled.
He was crushed for our iniquities;
The chastisement of our welfare was upon him,
And through his stripes were we healed.
And we like sheep have gone astray,
We had turned every one to his own way;
And the Lord made to light upon him
The guilt of us all.

When he was oppressed, he humbled himself,
And opened not his mouth—
Like a sheep that is led to the slaughter,
Or like an ewe that is dumb before her shearers,
He opened not his mouth.

. . . .

Yet the Lord was pleased to crush him by sickness,
That when he had made himself a guilt-offering,
He might see posterity, might prolong his life,
And the pleasure of the Lord might prosper in his hand.
Now through his suffering shall he see it, and be satisfied;
Through his affliction shall my servant, the Righteous One,
bring righteousness to many,
And shall carry the burden of their guilt.[7]

Read also the Mission of the Servant, Isaiah 42:1-4, another song of the Second Isaiah.

David the King and Shepherd, Ezekiel 37:24-28
The Faithful Shepherd, Ezekiel 34:11-16; 23-31[8]

At Tel Abib on the banks of the Chebar, which is a canal passing by the city of Nippur, Ezekiel experienced the vision that made him a great prophet of the Restoration. This was in the year 593 B.C. Ezekiel believed that Israel's sin had merited punishment but that it had been carried too far, and now that the nations held Israel in supreme contempt God, to vindicate His holiness before the world, must restore His people. In the vision of the Valley of Dry Bones (37:1-23) the prophet foretells the restoration of the renewed community, and then goes on to describe the faithful shepherd king.

The Glory of the New Jerusalem, Isaiah 60:1-22
The Year of the Lord's Favor, Isaiah 61:1-62:12

After the Exile one of the disciples of the Second Isaiah, a poet like his master, expressed his conception of the mission of his people in the moving passage, Isaiah 59:15*b*-63:6. He came to a disheartened people. Though a temple had been erected it was a poor bare edifice, possessed of none of the splendor of the old Temple, and the city and its walls still lay in ruins. This Third Isaiah saw better things ahead for his people and told them so in words as courageous and inspiring as any that ever came from a prophet of God:

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[7] Translation from *The Old Testament, An American Translation.*

[8] Ezekiel 34 corresponds in its shepherd imagery to John 10:1-18. Our word "pastor" is the Latin word for shepherd. This chapter inspired Milton's famous lines concerning the bishops and pastors in *Lycidas:*

such as for their bellies' sake
Creep and intrude and climb into the fold.

. . . .

The hungry sheep look up and are not fed,
But swoln with wind, and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and the foul contagion spread;
Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw
Daily devours apace and nothing said. (lines 119 ff.)

> Arise, shine, for thy light is come,
> And the glory of Yahweh is risen upon thee!
> For behold, darkness covers the earth,
> And dense darkness the peoples;
> But upon thee Yahweh will arise,
> And His glory will be seen upon thee;
> And nations will come to thy light,
> And kings to the brightness of thy rising.[9]

The second poem opens with the well-known lines:

> The Spirit of the Lord Yahweh is upon me,
>   because Israel has anointed me;
> To preach good tidings to the meek, He has sent me,
>   to bind up the broken hearted,
> To proclaim liberty to the captives,
>   and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;
> To proclaim the year of Yahweh's favor,
>   and the day of vengeance of our God;
> To comfort all that mourn,
>   to appoint to them that mourn in Zion,
>   to give to them a garland for ashes,
> The oil of joy for mourning,
>   the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;
> That they may be called trees of righteousness,
>   the planting of Yahweh, that He may be glorified.[10]

Songs of Deutero-Zechariah, Zechariah, chaps. 9-11

One of these songs speaks thus of the Messiah:

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[9] Translation from J. M. P. Smith, *The Prophets and Their Times*, p. 21. Study the entire section.

[10] Translation from J. A. Bewer, *The Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 246.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion,
  Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem;
Behold, thy king comes to thee,
  he is vindicated and victorious;
Lowly and riding upon an ass,
  even a colt the foal of an ass.[11]

The Heavenly Son of Man, I Enoch 46:1-3; 48:3-6

And there I saw One who had a head of days,
And his head was white as wool,
And with him was another being whose countenance had the appearance of a man,
And his face was full of graciousness, like one of the holy angels . . .
This is the Son of Man who hath righteousness,
And who revealeth all the treasures of that which is hidden,
Because the Lord of Spirits hath chosen him,
And whose lot hath preëminence before the Lord of Spirits in uprightness forever.

Yea, before the sun and signs were created,
Before the stars of heaven were made,
His name was named before the Lord of Spirits,
He shall be a staff to the righteous whereon to stay themselves and not fall,
And he shall be the light of the Gentiles,
And the hope of those who are troubled of heart.[12]

Joyous Old Age, Jubilees, chap. 13
Gathering of the Faithful, Philo

The days will begin to increase and the children of men will be older from generation to generation and from day to day, till the length of their life approaches a thousand years. And there will be none old or weary of life, and they will all be children of youths, and will pass and live their days in peace and joy, without there being any Satan or evil spoiler; for all their days will be days of blessing and healing.

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[11] Translation from J. A. Bewer, *The Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 420. Study the entire section. Matthew (21:5-7), overlooking the Hebrew parallelism, takes "even" in the sense of "and" and so speaks of two asses on which Jesus rode. Mark and Luke speak only of a colt.

[12] I Enoch 46:1-3, 48:3-6, translated and edited by R. H. Charles. This is one of the best descriptions of this type of Messiah.

> At that time will the Lord heal his servants, and they will arise and see ever deeper peace and pursue again their enemies. And they will see it and give thanks again and rejoice evermore.[13]

The moral quality of the new age is emphasized by Philo:

> Though they should be in the ends of the earth as slaves among their enemies who have taken them as captives, yet they will be set at liberty at a given sign on one day, because their sudden turning to virtue astonishes their masters. For they will release them because they are ashamed of bearing rule over their betters. When, then, this unexpected freedom is bestowed on those who before were scattered in Hellas and in other countries, on islands and on the continent, they will hasten with one impulse from all quarters to the place pointed out to them, led by a divine superhuman appearance, which invisible to others, is visible only to the delivered.[14]

For beauty and pathos the Jewish songs of hope remain unsurpassed. They have been a prolific source of themes for succeeding poets and singers. The themes of Handel's *Messiah*, perhaps our most precious musical heritage, are largely taken from these chapters. The catastrophes of the Jews would have ended as they began, in unrelieved tragedy, had it not been for the ethical ideals and the personal influence of the prophets and Jesus.

3. THE EPIC OF THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

The book of Revelation grew out of the persecutions experienced by the Christians in the reign of the Emperor Domitian, who ruled from 81 to 96 A.D. This emperor authorized a proclamation to be made that he should be treated as a god and that worship must be paid to him in the temples provided for the purpose throughout the empire. There was historical sanction for the principle of emperor-worship, for Cæsar had been deified with the title of Divus Julius on anuary 1, 42 B.C. The long and prosperous reign of Augustus was favorable to the growth of the practice, and statues of him patterned after those of Jupiter were set up in many famous buildings and temples. Its vogue continued to spread and by the latter part of the first century the time was ripe for an organized cult of worship to the living emperor, as well as his dead predecessor. Such worship received wide support as a bond of imperial unity, and when the Christians declined to conform because of allegiance to their king, the Christ, this refusal was quite naturally interpreted as disloyalty and treason. This worship of the emperor seems to have been carried out with especial zeal in the province of Nearer Asia, in which were located seven famous early Christian churches—Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.

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[13] The Book of Jubilees; translation by Ewald.

[14] Philo, *De execrationibus*, Secs. 8, 9. Translation from Schürer, *Jewish People in the Time of Christ*, Div. II, Vol. II, pp. 146 f. Note that the divine appearance here is not the Messiah but something analogous to the pillar of fire in the march through the wilderness.

There was a certain John, of whom tradition relates that as a very young man he had perhaps seen Christ or at any rate been trained by his immediate followers, who at the time of this persecution under Domitian was bishop of Ephesus. He made pastoral visits to the churches in these seven cities and exercised a deep influence over the Christians living in them. He was a gentle, white-haired old man whom the little children loved. When the Roman officials began their enforcement of this decree that divine honors must be paid to Domitian, he was one of the first to be arrested but, thanks perhaps to his white hairs and saintly character, he was not put to death but was sentenced to penal labor on an island called Patmos. He seems to have been permitted to send brief messages to the members of his beloved churches to comfort their hearts and steady their faith. If in these letters he had used plain open speech the Roman officials would have redoubled their efforts to persecute the recipients and perhaps would have put the writer to death. So he used the language of dreams and visions, innocent enough for the eye of the Romans, but pregnant with other meanings for his correspondents. Later these messages were collected and edited to form our present book of Revelation.

ANALYSIS AND KEY TO INTERPRETATION

I. Assurances of Christ's Coming and Victory (chaps. 1-11)
  1. Introduction (chap. 1)
  2. Letters to the seven churches (chaps. 2, 3)
  3. The first cycle of judgment (4:1-8:5)
    (*a*) The vision of God and the lamb (chaps. 4, 5)
    (*b*) Opening of the seals (chap. 6)
    (*c*) Interlude (chap. 7)
    (*d*) The seventh seal (8:1-5)
  4. The second cycle of judgment (8:6-11:19)
    (*a*) The first four trumpets (8:6-12)
    (*b*) The fifth and sixth trumpets (8:13-9:21)
    (*c*) Interlude (10:1-11:14)
    (*d*) The seventh trumpet (11:15-19)
II. Winning the Victory (chaps. 12-20)
  1. The opposing forces (chaps. 12-14)
    (*a*) The Woman, the Dragon, and the Man-child (12:1-16)
    (*b*) The conflict (12:7-17)
    (*c*) The First Beast and the Second Beast (chap. 13)
    (*d*) Interlude (chap. 14)
  2. The third cycle of judgment (15:1-19:10)
    (*a*) Preparation (chap. 15)
    (*b*) The bowls of wrath (chap. 16)
    (*c*) Judgment and downfall of Rome (17:1-19:10)
  3. The last judgment (19:11-20:15)
III. Enjoyment of the Victory (chaps. 21, 22)
  1. The heavenly Jerusalem (21:1-22:5)
  2. The closing message (22:5-21)

SYMBOLIC TERMS

"One like unto the Son of Man" .	Christ
Seven-branched candlestick . .	Seven churches of Asia
Seven stars	Angels of the seven churches
Seven lamps	Seven spirits of God
Seven seals	Complete vision of future
Lamb	Christ

The four horsemen—white	Parthian warriors
red	War
black	Famine
pale	Death
42 months—1260 days, 3½ years	Period of persecution
Dragon	Herod—Satan
Woman	Mary—the church
Man-child	Jesus—the Christians [15]
First Beast	Roman emperor
Second Beast	Priesthood of Roman emperor
Harlot riding First Beast	Social life of Rome
Beast with death stroke	Domitian [16]
King on white horse	Christ
Thousand years	Christ's rule on earth
Twelve precious stones	Twelve signs of the zodiac
The ram	The amethyst
The bull	The hyacinth
The twins	The chrysoprase
The crab	The topaz
The lion	The beryl
The virgin	The chrysolite
The balance	The sardius
The scorpion	The sardonyx
The archer	The emerald
The goat	The chalcedon
The water-carrier	The sapphire
The fishes	The jasper [17]

Lafcadio Hearn in a lecture given at Tokio on "The Bible as English Literature," spoke thus of Revelation:

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[15] In these three there is a double symbolism, the one universal, the other historical and derivative.

[16] See especially 13:12 and 17:11. A belief prevailed that Nero, who had committed suicide in 68 A.D., would return to the earth and be incarnated as an evil spirit in one of the emperors. Because of Domitian's extreme cruelty he was thought by many to be this reincarnation of Nero. This myth of *Nero Redivivus* explains "the beast whose death stroke was healed," and the "beast that was and is not and is also an eighth" emperor. Domitian was Nero (the fifth emperor) and also the eighth (omitting Galba, Otho and Vitellius).

[17] See R. H. Charles, *Commentary on Revelation,* Vol II, p. 167. John gives the jewels in reverse order from that of the zodiac, using them only in an ornamental sense. "Thus he deliberately disconnects the Holy City from the city of the gods." The above "key" is in accord with the general critical position, but see commentaries.

> I should like to recommend the reading of the closing book . . . to describe something at once very terrible and very grand. Whether one understands the meaning of this mysterious text makes very little difference; the sonority and beauty of its sentences, together with the tremendous character of its imagery, cannot but powerfully influence the mind and ear and thus stimulate literary taste. At least two of the great prose writers of the eighteenth century, Carlyle and Ruskin, have been vividly influenced by the book of Revelation.[18]

Professor Charles provides excellent guidance in regard to the literary characteristics of this book:

> Nearly always when dealing with his greatest themes, the Seer's words assume—perhaps unconsciously at times—the form of parallelism familiar in Hebrew poetry. Even the strophe and anti-strophe are found. To print such passages as prose is to rob them of half their force. It is not only that the form is thereby lost, but also much of the thought that in a variety of ways is reënforced by this parallelism. Though our author has for his theme the inevitable conflicts and antagonisms of good and evil, of God and the powers of darkness, yet his book is emphatically a Book of Songs. Dirges there are indeed, and threnodies . . . they spring from the lips of the kings of the earth, its merchant-princes, its sea-folk overwhelmed by the fall of the empire of this world and the destruction of the mighty ones . . . but a faith immeasurable, an optimism inexpugnable, a joy inextinguishable press for utterance and take form in anthems of praise and gladness and thanksgiving, as the Seer follows in vision the varying fortunes of the world struggle, till at last he sees evil fully and finally destroyed, righteousness established forevermore, and all the faithful—even the weakest of God's servants amongst them—enjoying everlasting blessedness in the eternal City of God, bearing his name on their foreheads and growing more and more into his likeness.[19]

Only a few selections can be given here. The student should study the entire book, especially the songs.

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[18] Quoted from Purinton and Purinton, *Literature of the New Testament,* p. 116. For beautiful sonorous effects read such passages as 4:8-11 and 11:15-19 in the Latin.

[19] R. H. Charles, *Revelation, International Critical Commentary,* Vol. I, Preface, p. xiv.

Revelation 21:21-27

And the twelve gates were twelve pearls;
Each one of the gates was of one pearl,
And the streets of the city were of pure gold, transparent as glass.

And I saw no temple therein:
For the Lord God Almighty is the temple thereof,
And the Lamb is the ark of the covenant thereof.

And the city hath no need of the sun nor yet of the moon to shine upon it;
For the glory of the Lord doth lighten it,
And the lamp thereof is the Lamb.

And the nations shall walk by the light thereof:
And the kings of the earth do bring their glory into it.
And the gates thereof shall not be shut day or night.

And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it;
And there shall not enter into it anything unclean or one that maketh an abomination or a lie;
But only they that are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Revelation 22:3-5

And I heard a great voice from the throne saying,

Behold the tabernacle of God is with men,
And He shall dwell with them,
And they shall be His people,
And He shall be their God.

. . . .

And there shall be no more night,
And they have no need of light of lamp or light of sun,
For the Lord God shall cause His face to shine upon them;
And they shall reign forever and forever.

Verses 16-18

I am the root and the offspring of David,
The bright and morning star,

I am the Alpha and Omega,
The first and the last,
The beginning and the end.

FOR STUDY AND COMPARISON

HANDEL, GEORGE F., "The Messiah," Scripture arranged by Charles Jennens.
THOMAS of Celano, "Dies Iræ."
BERNARD of Cluny, "Jerusalem the Golden."
Latin Hymn, "Jerusalem, My Happy Home."
DANTE, "The Saints in Glory," from *Paradiso.*
JOAQUIN MILLER, "The Fortunate Isles."
Sioux Indian Song, "The Land of the Evening Mirage," translated by A. M. Beede.
FELIX ADLER, "Hail! the Glorious Golden City."
FRANCIS T. PALGRAVE, "The City of God."[20]

It will not be amiss here to point to the dreams of other noble souls who have looked forward to a better world, such as Plato in the *Republic,* Moore in the *Utopia,* and Augustine in the *City of God.* In the degree that these visions have steeled the hearts of men to struggle harder for a better social order they have demonstrated something of the same power as that of the prophets. These stanzas of Blake burn with genuine prophetic fervor:

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountain green?
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?

And did the countenance divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among those dark Satanic mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold!
Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear: O clouds unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire!

I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.[21]

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[20] All these poems may be found in Caroline M. Hill, *The World's Great Religious Poetry,* pp. 735-781.

[21] William Blake, *Poems.* This extract is from "Milton." Modern Library Edition, p. 233.

One of our leading American poets, Vachel Lindsay, is in the true line of the prophetic succession, a veritable Sir Galahad for the Kingdom. This is especially true of these poems:

A Rhyme about an Electrical Advertising Sign.
King Arthur's Men Have Come Again.
I Heard Immanuel Singing
Galahad, Knight Who Perished.
The Soul of the City Receives the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

How many of us could stand on that section of Broadway where the electric signs make their varied peddling appeal and dream of any connection between New York and the New and Holy City. Yet Lindsay sings:

Some day this old Broadway shall climb to the skies,
And a ribbon of cloud to a soul wind shall rise.
And we shall be lifted rejoicing by night,
Till we join with the planets who choir their delight.

The signs in the streets and the signs in the skies
Shall make a new zodiac guiding the wise,
And Broadway make one with that marvelous stair
That is climbed by the rainbow-clad spirits of prayer.

One of America's adopted sons, Israel Zangwill, found in the country of his new citizenship a greater hope than even Zion offered. He puts these words in David's mouth:

> Yes, East and West, and North and South, the palm and the pine, the pole and the equator, the crescent and the cross—how the great alchemist melts and fuses them with his purging flame! Here shall they all unite to build the Republic of Man and the Kingdom of God. Ah, Vera, what is the glory of Rome and Jerusalem, where all the races and nations come to worship and look back, compared with the glory of America, where all races and nations come to labor and look forward. . . . Peace, peace to all ye unborn millions, fated to fill this giant continent—the God of our children give you Peace.[22]

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[22] Israel Zangwill, *The Melting Pot,* pp. 184 f.

4. GENTLE HOPES

The student of religious literature is aware of a tendency among many peoples in similar periods of national distress to pin their hopes of better days on a coming deliverance. Sometimes their plight is thought to be due to a temporary setback of the good in the conflict always going on between supernatural powers of good and evil. Again, this literature is full of confidence in a coming social regeneration or reconstruction which shall repair the ravages of war. To the latter type belong a considerable collection of Egyptian prophecies, some of which seem to have exerted a considerable influence upon the people of Israel. For at least three thousand years before Christ a wide literary activity was carried on in Egypt.[23] That some of it influenced Hebrew apocalyptic thought seems to be well established both by historical tradition and recent archæological research. The parallels between certain Egyptian rhapsodies and Hebrew prophecies are striking.

The great period in Egypt when thinking centered on social reform fell in the time of the Middle Kingdom, after the expulsion of the Asiatics. As the Egyptians took stock of their ruined social institutions a wave of pessimism and disillusion swept over them. This was succeeded by a social awakening expressed in such writings as "The Admonitions of Ipuwer," composed in the Twelfth Dynasty. After a black picture has been drawn of the evils of civil war, foreign invasion, anarchy and crime, it ends with a famous "messianic passage":

> He brings cooling to the flame. It is said he is the shepherd of all men. There is no evil in his heart. When his herds are few he passes the day to gather them together, their hearts being fevered. Would that he had discerned their character

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[23] On the whole subject of Egyptian apocalyptic literature and its influence on the Hebrew prophets see C. C. McCown, "Hebrew and Egyptian Apocalyptic Literature." *Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. XVIII, No. 4, pp. 357 ff.

> in the first generation. Then would he have smitten evil. He would have stretched forth his arm against it. He would have smitten the seed thereof and their inheritance. . . . Where is he today? Does he sleep perchance? Behold his might is not seen.[24]

The "Vision of Neferrohu," which was composed in the reign of Amen-em-het I, whose glories it pictures, promises a new day and a great king:

> There is a king shall come from the South whose name is Ameny, Son of a Nubian woman. . . . He shall receive the white crown, he shall assume the Red Crown; he shall unite the two powerful ones; he shall propitiate Horus and Set with what they love.[24]

The religious thought of Babylonia revolved about the tragic struggle between Marduk and Tiamat, the alternating fortunes of which divided the life of the nation into periods of order and of chaos. Finally Marduk won, but the new order which he established was terminated by a flood. A second order set up by him was terminated by famine and disaster. No vision of a better world to come ever became current among the Babylonians. The same notion of a dualistic warfare between a pair of supernatural combatants lies at the root of Persian thinking. The world came into being through the creative activity of the good God, but afterward it fell under the rule of evil. Persian speculation divided the history of the world into four periods of three thousand years each. In the first period man was a purely spiritual creature with an intangible body which was, however, susceptible to evil. The second era was a period of material creation in which the good God was regnant. The Prince of Darkness was in control during the third period, save the first thousand years, which was the era of Yima the Brilliant. The fourth trimillennium was ushered in by Zoroaster, with whom the struggle entered upon a new stage. When Zoroaster's period of three thousand years (the present age) comes to an end a Savior, Soshyans, born of Zoroaster's seed and miraculously preserved through the ages, will come upon the scene. The power of death will then be broken, the old order perish, the souls of men and their former bodies reunite, and the final era of blessedness be ushered in.

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[24] Translations from C. C. McCown, *op. cit.* See also Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt,* pp. 193-212, for further translations. See also a third example, "Apology of the Potter to King Amenophi," in the same works.

A similar super-earthly struggle is depicted in the literature of the Greeks. Zeus, the son of Kronos, it tells us, overthrew his father and became the creator of a new race of men. A second great conflict took place in the present order of things between Zeus and Prometheus. Prometheus had given fire to men and shown them how to use it, thus enabling them to work out their own destiny and to advance the arts and sciences. In consequence the gods tended to become less respected and to lose their hold on men. Hesiod, who was a conservative, declares in his *Works and Days* (eighth century B.C.) that all the troubles of men are due to the irreverence shown by Prometheus toward Zeus. Although he divides world history into four descending ages—the ages of Gold, of Silver, of Bronze, and of Iron—yet he seems to hope for a new and better order of things when the present Iron Age is over, for he wishes he had been born later, so that he could enjoy it. The same decay of men is likewise lamented by the poet Aratus of Soli, who says:

> How base a progeny sprang from golden sires,
> And viler shall they be whom ye beget.[25]

The statesmen of Rome, in accordance with this same general notion of successive cycles in world history, saw in contemporary events the evidence of a decadent age and hoped for the dawn of a new order. At Cæsar's funeral the alleged appearance of a star in broad daylight is taken to presage the end of the existing and the beginning of a new era. Horace in the second ode of his first book mentions apparitions, and with prophetic passion suggests that men may soon take the Elysian kingdom of heaven by force; but he is perhaps using a metaphor here to refer to the reign of Augustus which he excessively admires.[26] The longing was growing among the Romans for a national deliverer who would bring wars to an end and usher in the Golden Age of peace. Tibullus writes: "How happily men lived when Saturn reigned before the earth was laid open by long roads . . . there were no armies, no enmity, no wars, nor had the cruel smith forged the sword with ruthless art. Now under the rule of Jupiter slaughter and swords are incessant, now sea and land offer a thousand ways of sudden death." [27] How fortunate for him he was not spared to our day!

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[25] Aratus of Soli, *Phænomena,* lines 122-123.

The Sibylline Books—the bible of the Roman religion—disclose the approach of a new era. Under the inspiration of these as well as other oracles and beliefs Virgil uttered his famous forecast of the impending millennium:

> The last age prophesied by the Sibyl is come and the great series of ages begins anew. Justice now returns, Saturn reigns once more, and a new progeny is sent down from heaven. O chaste Lucina, be thou propitious to the infant boy under whom first the Iron Age shall cease and the Golden Age over all the world arise. Now thine own Apollo reigns. While thou too, Pollio, while thou art consul, this glory of our age shall dawn and the great months begin to roll. Under thy rule all vestiges of our guilt shall disappear, releasing the earth from fear forever. He (the new-born child) shall partake of the life of the gods, he shall see heroes mingling with gods, and be seen by them, and he shall bring peace to the world, ruling it with his father's might. On thee, O child,

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[26] Horace, *Epodes,* 16.

[27] Tibullus, i, 3. Quoted from Case, *Evolution of Early Christianity,* p. 223

> the earth as her first offerings, shall pour forth everywhere without culture creeping ivy with lady's glove, and the Egyptian beans with smiling acanthus intermixed. The goats of themselves shall convey homeward their udders distended with milk nor shall the herds dread monstrous lions. The very cradle shall blossom with attractive flowers. The serpent shall perish and the secret poison plant shall disappear; the Assyrian balm shall grow in every field. But as soon as thou shalt be able to read the praises of heroes and the achievements of thy sire, and to know what virtue is, the field shall by degrees grow yellow with ripening corn, blushing grapes shall hang on the rude brambles, and hard oaks shall drip with dewy honey. . . . Dear offspring of the gods, mighty seed of Jove, enter thy great heritage for the time is now at hand. See how the world's massive dome bows before thee, earth and oceans and the vault of heaven. See how all things rejoice at the approach of this age. Oh, that my last stage of life may continue so long, and so much breath be given me as shall suffice to sing thy deeds.[28]

Almost every one of these statements of Virgil's *Eclogue* can be paralleled in some Jewish messianic predictions.

In most instances the land of future weal is more vague and far distant—some unattainable "Isles of the Blest." Ulysses' ship, sent by a "breeze of the North Wind," was borne:

> To the limits of the world, to the deep-flowing Oceanus. There is the land and city of the Cimmerians, shrouded in mist and cloud, and never does the shining sun look down on them with his rays, neither when he climbs to the starry heavens, nor again when he turns earthward from the firmament, but baleful night is spread over miserable mortals. Thither we came and beached the ship.

He continues:

> The spirits of the dead that be departed gathered them out from Erebus. Brides and youths unwed, and old men of many and evil days, and tender maidens with grief yet fresh at heart; and many there were wounded with bronze-shod spears, men slain in fight with their bloody mail about them.

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[28] Virgil, *Eclogue IV*. Quoted from Case, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

> And these many ghosts flocked together from every side about the trench with a wondrous cry and pale fear got hold of me.[29]

Release from the cruel round of fate, whether in this life or the next, was looked upon as the most desirable of all boons. Salvation in the Mystery Religions consisted in escape from the flesh and rebirth into an incorporeal life. The stake which the future held out to the Orphics and others was a somewhat similar release. An early Orphic poem reads, "They who are pious in this life beneath the rays of the sun enjoy a gentler lot when they have died in the beautiful meadows around deep-flowing Acheron."[30]

James Adam gives an Orphic dialogue of a departed soul with the judging deity. The soul says:

> I have escaped from the lamentable and cruel circle; I have set my eager feet within the longed-for ring. I have passed to the bosom of the Mistress and Queen of the underworld.

The departed soul is then addressed as follows:

> O happy and blessed One, thou shalt be a God instead of a mortal. . . . Hail, for thy sufferings are past. . . . Though thou art become a God from having been a man . . . hail, hail, thou that farest to the fight through the sacred meadows and the grove of Persephone.[31]

Few accounts of the future life surpass the following Pindaric Ode:

> The guilty souls of the dead straightway pay the penalty here on earth; and the sins committed in this kingdom of Zeus are judged by one beneath the ground, hateful Necessity, enforcing the doom he speaks. But ever through the nights and ever through the days the same, the good receive an unlaborious life beneath the sunshine. They vex not with might of hand the earth or the waters of the sea for food that satisfieth not, but among the honored gods, such as had pleasure in keeping of oaths enjoy a tearless life; but the others have pain too fearful to behold. Howbeit they who thrice on either side

[29] *Odyssey,* xi, 6, 36 f. Translation from T. R. Glover, *Virgil,* p. 239.
[30] Quoted from James Adam, *Religious Teachers of Greece,* p. 105.
[31] *Ibid.,* p. 107.

> of death have stood fast and wholly refrained their souls from deeds unjust, journey on the road to Zeus to the tower of Kronos where the ocean breezes blow around the island of the blest and flowers gleam bright with gold, some on trees of glory on the land while others the water feeds; with wreaths whereon they entwine their arms and crown their heads.[32]

The premium put on social justice is thus emphasized by Cicero in the *Republic:*

> For all who have saved, helped, or increased their country there is a sure and definite place in the sky where in happiness they may enjoy eternal life. For to that supreme God who rules the universe, nothing that is on earth is more grateful than those gatherings and ordered societies of men which are called states. The rulers and saviors of these proceed hence and return again thither.[33]

We will close this series of songs concerning the hope for a better future with the famous passage in the Sixth Book of the Æneid:

> We suffer each a several ghost and then we are sent through broad Elysium and a few of us abide in the happy fields, until long days, and a full orb of time having taken away the ingrown stain and left untainted the ethereal sense and the pure spiritual flame. All these when the wheel has revolved for them a thousand years, the god calls in vast array to Lethe's stream that in forgetfulness they may see once more the dome of sky above and begin again to wish to return to the body.[34]

The modern poet who referred to Rome as "that hard Roman world," must have overlooked the fact that it was the world in which Virgil lived and wrote and that Rome loved the gracious and tender Virgil. The early Christian loved him and the early church recognized in Virgil a friend and forerunner. It is easy to fancy, as an unknown poet has done, Paul dreaming of what a Christian he would have made had he been privileged to learn of Jesus. Much early Christian thought of the future life was influenced to its advantage by Virgil. While the phrase of Sainte-Beuve, *"La venue même du Christ n'a rien qui étonne quand on a lu Virgile,"* [35] may not be fully accepted by critical scholars, there is truth in the utterance. Virgil was not far from the Kingdom.

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[32] Pindar, *Ol.*, 2, 57. Adam, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

[33] Cicero, *Republic*, quoted from T. R. Glover, *Virgil*, p. 254.

[34] Virgil, *Æneid* vi, lines 743-751; Glover, *Virgil*, p. 269. See Glover, *op. cit.*, pp. 264 ff., for examples of Orphic tablets.

DISCUSSION TOPICS AND EXERCISES

1. What effect does a strong sense of national destiny, such as the messianic hope of the Jews, have upon
   (*a*) National and political progress?
   (*b*) Constructive social measures?
   (*c*) Tolerance of other peoples and cultures?
   (*d*) Intellectual culture and freedom?
2. Discuss the relation between social and economic utopias and religious ones.
3. Compare the hopes of future life among the Jews, Romans, and Greeks.

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[35] Sainte-Beuve, *Étude sur Virgile,* p. 68. "Even the coming of Christ did not astonish those who were familiar with Virgil." The statement is discussed in Glover, *Virgil,* p. 332, note.

On Gentile Hopes

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Smith, K. F., "Ages of the World" (Greek and Roman), Hastings' *Dictionary of Religion and Ethics,* Vol. I.

CHAPTER XI

A GROUP OF LOVE LYRICS

Many and various are the interpretations of the book of Canticles. In the traditional view it is an allegory of the divine love. According to a more recent explanation it is a drama setting forth the love experiences of a man and a woman. The commonest point of view is to regard it simply as a poet's group of love songs.

No one can read the songs without noting how highly sensuous is the imagery and free and ardent the expressions of love. The central theme of the book is that of a love between man and maid, of which it discourses naïvely, yet with force and passion. The Jewish rabbis naturally hesitated to place such a book in their Scripture canon, and it was not until the Council of Jamnia, about 90 A.D., that Canticles was officially added to the Megilloth, or Rolls, and authorized to be read at the Passover feast. It rapidly grew in liturgical favor, but its secular use was frowned upon: a rule was put in force that it should be sung only at religious festivals and in the most devout spirit. Rabbi Akiba went to extremes in saying that "the whole world does not outweigh the day in which the Song of Songs was given to Israel; all the writings are holy but the Song is the holiest of them all."

The Song won liturgical favor because it could be construed as an allegory of divine love, which might fittingly be attributed to the immortal Solomon. By treating it as allegory the rabbis could maintain that it celebrated the love of the human heart for God and God's yearning for man's love in return. As in Hosea, God was the bridegroom and Israel the bride. The reference of the rapturous expressions of love was understood to apply to mystic communings with God. The early Christian church in taking over the Song made Christ the bridegroom and the church the bride, an idea which was carried to most ridiculous extremes.[1] During the Middle Ages it became a treasury from which writers on religious love might draw freely and a much used source of mystic effusions.

Dramatic interpretations of the book have recently come into favor. On one view there are two principal characters: King Solomon and the Shulammite maiden, supplemented by choruses of maidens and youths. A rival view claims that there are three principal characters: Solomon, the maiden and a rustic lover of hers, which makes a more complicated plot. Solomon had fallen in love with the maiden and brought her to his harem, but no allurements of the king could entice her to forsake a shepherd lover, to whom she had given her heart. When she was permitted to return to him she sang the triumphant love song to be found in the last verses. But this dramatic view is hardly convincing, for we do not often find rival lovers appearing arm in arm, paying glowing tribute to the same maiden.

Another view is that the book is a cycle of love songs sung during the customary seven days' marriage feast which graced a Syrian wedding. It was the practice at these feasts to make believe that the bridegroom was a king and the bride a queen, the village young men and women acting as their respective bodyguards and choral maidens. This may explain how the name of Solomon came to be attached to this cycle of songs. Such an interpretation has the further merit that it accounts for the apparent connection between the songs without making any doubtful claim of dramatic unity. Evidence of connection may be seen in the fact that the bride is repeatedly spoken of as a garden, the groom as Solomon, and the bride's attendants as "daughters of Jerusalem," while there are recurring refrains such as "until the day be cool and the shadows fly away." [2]

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[1] Origen wrote a ten-volume commentary on this book. Bernard of Clairvaux has eighty-two sermons on the first two chapters alone. Even the Reformation was not able to break the spell of the allegorical interpretation.

Still another theory, that the book is merely a collection of unconnected love songs, has had many advocates. An old poetic version in Middle High German from the fifteenth century, reprinted by Herder, divides its contents into forty-four little songs. Renan and Reuss list sixteen songs which they consider genuinely Jewish. Jastrow lists twenty-three which he regards as original and thinks that they were collected and given their present form about 300 to 250 B.C.

The interesting suggestion has recently been made by Professor Meek that the book is a body of liturgical poetry which had its origin in the worship of Tammuz, the Sun-god, originally the son of the Babylonian Ea and the goddess Sirdu. Tammuz later became the bridegroom of Ishtar, the goddess of fertility. The songs were ritual songs in celebration of their marriage, of which the luxuriant life of budding nature in the spring is the fruit. The Tammuz origin, says Professor Meek, was in due time forgotten and the songs came to be used in connection with the spring festivals in honor of Yahweh.[3] While this view has its attractions we are inclined to believe, notwithstanding the fact that much of the phraseology is similar to that of the Tammuz cult, that these are genuine love songs arising within the bounds of Jewry. Whatever may have been their origin it is clear that they are fine specimens of lyric poetry. Their view of woman is higher than that of most ancient writings. The relations between the sexes proceed on a basis of equality. Woman as she appears here possesses personal worth in her own right and is not merely the plaything of man. J. M. P. Smith says, "The love between man and woman is not conceived of as a mere fleeting passion: it is rather a permanent and invincible attitude of mind and heart."[4]

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[2] One suggested division for the seven-day cycle is as follows: Canto I, chaps. 1:2-2:7; II, 2:8-17; III, 3:1-11; IV, 4:1-5:1; V, 5:2-6:9; VI, 6:10-8:4; VII, 8:5-14.

[3] T. J. Meek, "Canticles and the Tammuz Cult," *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature,* Vol. XXXIX (1922), pp. 1-14.

The student should read the entire book, comparing the standard versions with some of the special translations such as those of Gordon and Jastrow:[5]

The maiden to the youth (1:7)
Tell me, you whom I love,
where are you pasturing your flock,
where are you making your fold at noon;
For why should I be like one veiled,
beside the flock of your companions?

The chorus to the maiden (1:8)
If you do not know,
O most beautiful of women,
Follow in the tracks of the flock,
And pasture your kids,
beside the tents of the shepherds.

The youth to the maiden (1:15)
Ah, you are beautiful, my love;
ah, you are beautiful;
Your eyes are doves.

The maiden (1:16)
Ah, you are beautiful, my beloved
yea, lovely.
Yea, our couch is leafy.

The maiden (2:1)
I am the Rose of Sharon
A lily of the valleys.

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[4] J. M. P. Smith, *The Moral Life of the Hebrews*, p. 290.

[5] A. R. Gordon, *Poets of the Old Testament*, Chap. 18; Morris Jastrow, *The Song of Songs*.

The youth (*2:2*)
As a lily among the thistles,
so is my loved one among the maidens.

In 2:8-13 the maiden is singing to the chorus about the youth who comes leaping to her in the joy of springtime:

The maiden
Hark, my beloved!
ah, here he comes,
Leaping over the mountains,
skipping over the hills.
My beloved is like a gazelle,
or a young stag.
Ah, here he stands,
behind our wall,
Looking through the windows,
peering through the lattices!
My beloved spoke up and said to me,

Rise, my love,
my beautiful one, come away;
For, see, the winter is past,
the rain is over and gone;
The flowers have appeared on the earth,
the time of song has come;
And the call of the turtle-dove
is heard in our land;
The fig tree is putting forth its figs
And the blossoming grape-vines give forth fragrance.
Rise, my love,
My beautiful one, come away.[6]

In 5:10-16 the maiden is singing to the chorus:

The maiden
My beloved is radiant and ruddy,
The chief of ten thousand;
His head is as gold most pure,
His locks like the raven.

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[6] Translations are taken from *The Old Testament, An American Translation,* edited by J. M. P. Smith. A few modifications have been made.

His eyes are like doves
  By brooks of water,
Washed as with milk,
  Perched by the floods.

. . . . .

His mouth is most sweet—
  He is all of him lovely,
This is my loved one, my friend,
  Ye daughters of Jerusalem.

The youth (*6:10*)

She looks out like the dawn,
  Fair as the moon,
Pure as the sun,
  Awful as army with banners.[7]

The book closes with a song in praise of love, unsurpassed in beauty and tenderness (8:6-8):

Set me as a seal upon thine heart,
  Set me as a seal upon thine arm:
For strong as death is love,
Unquenchable as Sheol is (its) passion;
Its flames are flames of fire,
A devouring fire.

Many waters cannot quench love,
Even rivers cannot sweep it away.
If a man would give all the wealth of his house
    for love,
They would utterly despise him.[8]

In this connection Dr. Harper quotes Browning, "Any Wife to any Husband":

It would not be because my eye grew dim
Thou couldst not find the love there, thanks to Him
  Who never is dishonored in the spark
He gave us from his fire of fires, and bade
Remember whence it sprang, nor be afraid
  While that burns on though all the rest grow dark.

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[7] Translations from A. R. Gordon, *Poets of the Old Testament,* p. 324.

[8] The last eight lines are from J. M. P. Smith's translation, *The Moral Life of the Hebrews,* p. 291.

Sir Philip Sidney's "Ditty" matches the phrase "set me as a seal upon thy heart":

> My true love hath my heart and I have his,
> By just exchange one for another given;
> I hold his dear and mine he cannot miss,
> There never was a better bargain driven.

For Study and Comparison

Egyptian Love Songs, Barton, *Archæology and the Bible,* 4th ed., pp. 473-476.
Babylonian Love Songs, *Ibid.,* pp. 476-478.
Browning, Robert, "In a Gondola," "Any Wife to Any Husband," etc.
Browning, Mrs. Elizabeth, *Portuguese Sonnets.*
Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, *The House of Life,* Part I, Youth and Change.
Wagner, Richard, *Tristan and Isolde.*

Herder considered the Canticles the oldest and sweetest love songs of the East. The parallels in Eastern literature—especially Egyptian, Babylonian and Turkish—are distinctly inferior to them. The only other poems comparable to them are the great love duets of literature, such as those of Tristan and Isolde, Siegfried and Brunhilde, and Romeo and Juliet. How like some passages in the Song is Romeo's:

> Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast,
> Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest.

Wotan, in Wagner's *Ring,* condemns Brunhilde to a long sleep upon the mountain walled in by a curtain of fire. In due time comes Siegfried, representative of the new order of manhood, who rides unscathed through the barricade of fire, discovers Brunhilde, cuts "the byrny from her bosom and wakes her with a kiss." Brunhilde sings her wonderful love hymn, giving herself to Siegfried and forsaking the dwelling of the gods:

Away Walhall's
Lightening world!
In dust with thy seeming.
Towers lie down!
Farewell greatness
And gift of the gods!

. . . .

I stand in sight
Of Siegfried's star;
For me he was
And for me he will be
Ever and always
One and all
Lightening love
And laughing death.

DISCUSSION TOPICS AND EXERCISES

1. Arrange the Song of Songs into dialogue responses, selecting speaker and chorus for each song.
2. Arrange the songs in a dramatic sequence, with solos and choruses appropriately related.
3. Select a group of love lyrics for comparison.

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CHAPTER XII

DRAMATIC LITERATURE

1. The Dramatic Instinct

When Heine said that "the Bible is the drama of the human race," he meant in its lifelike dramatic effects, rather than from the standpoint of technical literary structure. Just as there are epical stories in the Bible but no true epic, so there is much of the dramatic but no true drama in the Bible. The Scriptures contain pantomime and symbol, dramatic lyrics, dramatic visions, dramatic monologues, and dramatic prophecies with the people or the nation acting as a responsive chorus, but no cases in which the dramatic art is carried to the degree of technical perfection which it reached in Greece. For this there are reasons which we shall soon disclose.

The early Israelites were naturally dramatic. They delighted, as all primitive peoples do, in mimetic representations of hunting, war, and other communal activities. They made use of pantomimes and ceremonies and choral and mimic dances on festival and other occasions, as do all peoples, to perpetuate their traditions. The drama is the oldest of the imitative arts, for action and dance antedate language and writing in origin. "Nearly every primitive tale," says Grosse, "is a drama, for the teller is not simply relating history but he enlivens his words with appropriate intonations and gestures." [1]

Given song and action and we have the drama in germ. Sir Richard Jebb says that in its beginnings the Greek drama was an outgrowth of the dithyrambic chorus which sang the convivial songs associated with the god Dionysius. The songs presumably were of an orgiastic nature, accompanied by wild gesticulations. At first they were performed only by a chorus. Later, Thespis came forward as the reciter of verses and addressed his chorus of satyrs, doubtless impersonating a satyr himself. This same method of recitative and response by leader and chorus is characteristic of many Hebrew songs. But even this fell short of being dramatic. The declaimer of the verses could relate the story of an action already performed, but not until Æschylus introduced the innovation of presenting two persons and a chorus could an episode be enacted before the eyes of the spectators. By introducing the combination of dialogue and action on the stage, Æschylus altered the whole character of the primitive lyric chorus and created the drama. To relate the action on the stage in the past tense is lyric; to recreate it in the present tense is drama. Whereas, in the lyric the chorus is an essential feature, in the drama the chorus is retained simply to accentuate the emotions aroused by the action. As Brander Matthews points out, the Greeks did not put a chorus into their tragedies but put the tragedy into the chorus.[2] The Hebrew prophets represented God and themselves as the actors, and the people of Israel, through their response in songs of praise or petition, performed the same function as the chorus in a Greek tragedy. The prophets did not develop the scenic side of the drama.

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[1] Quoted from Brander Matthews, *A Study of the Drama,* p. 10.

One unique feature, however, the Hebrew prophets did introduce, namely, mimic action and symbolic or emblematic representation. They acted out the message which they wished to convey in such realistic fashion as to make conventional folks sometimes think they were crazy. In the book of Kings is the story of one of the "sons of the prophets" who wished to warn his king of the punishment awaiting him for unmerited clemency to a dangerous foe

[2] Brander Matthews, *A Study of the Drama,* p. 5.

of Israel. This prophet induced a friend to smite him on the head and then bandage it so that he would seem to be wounded severely. Then he waited on the highway for the king to come along and told him how he had been weak enough to let his assailant escape. The king severely censured him for his folly, whereupon the prophet removed the bandage and delivered to the king the message which he had received from the Lord, which was, that since the king had let an enemy go whom God had condemned, he must pay for it by the forfeit of his own life.[3]

The prophets often resorted to such dramatic actions. Isaiah went half-clad and barefoot once for three years (Isaiah 20:2-6) to warn the people of their folly and danger. The same prophet named his elder son *Shear Yashub,* as a token to his people that whatever crisis might happen "a remnant shall return." To a second son he gave the name *Maher shalal hashbaz,* meaning "swift is spoil, speedy is prey," to warn two of Israel's neighbors that the "riches of Samaria and the spoil of Damascus shall be carried away."[4] Two boys carrying such impossible names bore living sermons with them as they ran about the streets. Moved by the same dramatic urge Ezekiel once drew a diagram of Jerusalem on a tile and laid mimic siege to it, while Jeremiah on one occasion took his girdle and buried it by the bank of the river. William Blake in one of his "Memorable Fancies" puts the question to the prophets why they did these things. "The prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel dined with me," he says; "I asked Isaiah what made him go naked and barefoot three years. He answered, 'The same that made our friend Diogenes the Grecian.' I then asked Ezekiel why he ate dung and lay so long on his right side. He answered, 'The desire of raising other people into a perception of the Infinite.' "[5]

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[3] I Kings 20:35-43.

[4] Isaiah 8:1-4.

[5] William Blake, "Memorable Fancies," in *Heaven and Hell.*

Prophecy, as Moulton contends, is "the philosophy of history erected into a drama."[6] There is a suggestion of imminent crisis in all Hebrew prophetic announcements. Appalling things are about to happen. History is but the unrolling or unveiling of God's purpose and the present hour is always the one just preceding the dénouement. This crisis, called "The Day of Yahweh," is similar to the turning point in the drama, when the plot is about to be resolved by sharp changes in the course of events. The pervading sense of impending revolution gives a dramatic cast to Hebrew prophecy. This troubled situation also sets the stage for dramatic action and counteraction. God has a controversy with the false gods or with the nations that oppress Israel, or even with Israel itself. Elijah's dramatic contest with the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel is typical of the messages of all the prophets. National and international affairs are in a state of oscillation, there is a lack of equilibrium, opposing forces are drawn up in battle when the prophet steps to the front and announces the issue before the event. In sublime and majestic phrases, in apt and striking figures, the crises of history are interpreted and the destinies of the nation proclaimed. The empires of the world are told that they are playing on a stage which they did not build and journeying toward an end which they did not foresee; they are clay in the hands of Yahweh and the character of their parts is determined by Him.

Likewise, the brighter future of Israel was tied up with this "Day of the Lord." The Messiah whose coming the prophets announced was no *deus ex machina* who would cut short the thread of continuity in human affairs, but the anointed representative of the very God who was unrolling history. No hero of any drama ever interposed at a fitter moment than would the Messiah in mending this world order. Such books as Daniel and Revelation are conceived in true dramatic fashion, with actors, scenic background, a hero and his antagonist, and the plot with its final resolution.

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[6] R. G. Moulton, *The Literary Study of the Bible,* p. 404.

Why, then, did the Hebrews not fully develop dramatic technique and give to the world a true drama? The reasons are not far to seek. During the several centuries before the Christian era, in which Greek drama experienced its greatest development, the Jews were so continuously harassed by their oppressors that their own culture was deprived of the opportunity for adequate communal expression and had to be developed in secret. Naturally they would also be loath to copy from those who had so persecuted them, as to make them hate everything Hellenic. They felt forced to develop a culture peculiar to themselves and then assume an intolerant attitude toward those civilizations which showed no respect for their ideals. Another reason may be that since the rise of comedy preceded that of tragedy, the drama was associated in the mind of the Jew with the lighter and less serious aspects of life, and therefore deemed not to be a fit medium for the expression of religious emotion. The principal reason, however, lies in the attitude of the Hebrews toward God. They were so opposed to all forms of idolatry that any attempt to represent Yahweh on the stage would seem to them an extreme form of blasphemy.

2. Dramatic Lyrics and Prophecies

Many of the psalms in the Hebrew psalter are in the form of monologues, in which the speaker is narrating or recalling his own experience. In these psalms the lyrical element and not the monologue is the dominant strain. Personal experiences are presented in some of them with such realistic power as to make them close kin to the drama. The reader is asked to assume that the individual concerned is telling a past experience. Turning points in the experience are marked by a change in time or a second narrator is supposed to pick up the thread and go on with the story. Several of the psalms are constructed in this way.

Readings

Psalm 143, A monody of pure experience.
“ 6, Verses 1-7, prayer in trouble; verses 8-10, rejoicing.
“ 3, Verses 1-4, the night; verses 5-8, the morning.
“ 27, A dramatic anthem of national deliverance: verses 1-7, triumph; 7-12, prayer in former troubles; 13-14, a return to triumph.
“ 85, Same general arrangement as Psalm 27.

Psalm 143 contains no narrative element; it is a pure presentation of experience and therefore a dramatic lyric. But it is not a drama, which would involve a passage from one inward state to another that is here lacking. This missing element is supplied in Psalm 6. Here the sufferer is telling his own story, so that the experience is reënacted before us. There is an obvious inward change at the end of verse 7, which provides the contrast necessary to drama. This matter of change of circumstance and inward response is graphically illustrated in Psalm 3. The first four verses give voice to a stout-hearted trust in God's protection from enemies who are pressing hard, and the last four to a sharp alternation of mood on finding that trust vindicated. The outer change of night and day reflects and accentuates the inner change and enhances the dramatic contrast. This will be plain if the psalm be read with this interpretation in mind.

Psalms 27 and 85 are dramatic anthems in which the first phase is an attitude of faith and triumph, the second a mood of anguish and entreaty in a time of extreme distress, and the third a return to a soberer note of confidence that God will not forsake his servant.

Dramatic Prophecies

The People before the Mountains, Micah 6:1-8.
God and His People Israel, Hosea, chaps. 11-14.
The Winepress of God's Wrath, Isaiah 63.
The Voice in the Wilderness, Isaiah 40.
The Fall of Babylon, Isaiah 21:1-9.

We cite Micah's address before the mountains here, as one of the clearest examples of the habitual way in which the prophets summoned the people of Israel, at least in imagination, before the bar of the God of heaven and earth:

The voice of Yahweh

Arise, present your case before the mountains,
And let the hills hear your voice!
Hear, O mountains, the argument of the Lord,
And give ear, O foundations of the earth.
For the Lord has an argument with his people,
And a controversy with Israel.

My people, what have I done to you?
And how have I wearied you? Answer me!

. . . .

The people

Wherewith shall I come before the Lord,
And bow myself before God Most High?
Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings,
With calves a year old?
Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
With myriads of streams of oil?
Shall I give my first-born for my transgression,
The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

Answer of the prophet

You have been told, O man, what is good:
Yet what does the Lord require of you,
But to do justice and to love kindness,
And to walk humbly with your God?[7]

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[7] Translation from *The Old Testament, An American Translation.*

This answer of the prophet has become one of the best-loved definitions of religion. It is engraved on the statue dedicated to Religion in the Congressional Library at Washington. Thomas Huxley called it "A perfect ideal of religion . . . as wonderful an inspiration of genius as the art of Phidias or the science of Aristotle." It should be written over every portal where men live and work.

The reader will find it both interesting and profitable to arrange also the other prophecies cited above, so as to bring out their dramatic form.

3. Symbols and Emblems

One of the best-known devices used in the presentation of ideas by the prophets is their use of symbols and emblems. In fact, one can hardly think of them without recalling at the same time names, emblems, and symbols by which they both conveyed and illumined their message. We of the West demand more or less scientific accuracy in description, but the Oriental mind is more fond of pictorial and suggestive presentations of truth. Harry Emerson Fosdick tells of an Arab who was asked what a telegraph was. He replied, "It is just like a long dog. If you tickle his nose in Beirût he will wag his tail in Damascus." After all, there is much to be said for symbolism. It is possible to think of our flag as a bright-colored piece of bunting worth a few dollars, but if we treat it as a symbol it acquires a wealth of additional meanings and values. Dr. Gilkey puts the distinction thus: "These [the symbols] make no claim to be accurate in their analysis or exhaustive in their description; they deliberately select certain elements in a situation and put them in the foreground of their representation, in order to awaken or enlarge in the beholder certain appreciations—to arouse his sense of values or enrich his experience of life." [8]

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[8] Charles W. Gilkey, *Present-Day Dilemmas in Religion*, p. 106.

READINGS

Hosea's Fickle Wife, The book of Hosea.
The Girdle, Jeremiah 13.
The Potter, Jeremiah 18:1-17.
The Bottle, Jeremiah 19:1-10.
The Figs, Jeremiah, 24.
The Scroll, Jeremiah 51:59-64.
The Woman and Child, Isaiah 7:1-16.
The Baggage and the Hole in the Wall, Ezekiel 12:1-16.
The Sword, Ezekiel 21.
The Rusty Pot, Ezekiel 24:1-14.
The Two Sticks, Ezekiel 37:15-28.

The point of the above illustrations of the use of symbols and emblems is easily understood if the historical situation to which each applies be taken into account. The book of Hosea is a prophecy of the love of God for Israel, based on the prophet's personal experience with an unfaithful wife. Its date is about 740 B.C. Jeremiah was concerned with the signs and events which presaged the capture of Jerusalem, 586 B.C., when the various groups of Israelites were carried off to Babylonia. The two baskets of figs symbolize the deportation of the upper-class Israelites and the rejection of the poorer peasants as culls. Like clay Israel may be remolded or cast away in the lump by the divine Potter, or she may be broken like a bottle, or again she may be despoiled in Babylon like the girdle hidden on the shores of the river. As the scroll on which the sins of Babylon are written will crumple at the touch of flame, so that nation shall be destroyed as a penalty for its inhuman cruelty.

In 734 B.C., Rezin, King of Damascus, and Pekah, King of Samaria, had formed an alliance against King Ahaz of Judah, because he would not unite with them in warfare to overthrow Assyria. If all the small nations of western Asia had risen in concert against Assyria perhaps they might have proved strong enough to overthrow the Colossus of Nineveh, but unanimous action seemed impossible at the time. It was at this juncture that Isaiah gave to Ahaz the sign of the woman and child, to warn him that Damascus and Samaria would go down to defeat, which actually took place within twelve years. Had Judah joined with the Northern Israelite Kingdom in the campaign against Assyria on this occasion Jerusalem might have shared the downfall of Samaria in 722 B.C. Isaiah's message was simply that Judah should not let herself be drawn into the rebellion, that her fears were groundless, for God would protect His people. To reassure and strengthen Ahaz, who seemed to be wavering like an aspen leaf, Isaiah gave him this sign from Yahweh: a young woman would conceive and bear a son whom she would name Im-manu-el (God-with-us.),[9] and before this boy was old enough to know the difference between right and wrong the nations fighting for emancipation would be destroyed. This sign encouraged the king more than any mere word of the prophet's could possibly have done.

Ezekiel thought in pictures and symbols, some of which he painted in visions. Others he expressed in mimic action, and we shall consider only those. In the first one listed above, Yahweh commanded the prophet, as a sign, to bundle together a few of his belongings and pretend that he was a fugitive in headlong flight. In the middle of the night he crawled through a hole in the wall of his house and hastened through the streets of the city. Thus his warning that Jerusalem would be overthrown and its inhabitants forced to flee in earnest made a deeper impression than would otherwise have been possible. When Nebuchadrezzar started on his westward campaign the prophet dramatically represented him coming to a fork in the road, one way leading to Jerusalem and the other to Rabbah, a city of the Ammonites. With his sword, Ezekiel drew upon the ground the two fateful roads and by "the rattling of the arrows," i.e., by divination, indicated that Jerusalem would be the first to be attacked. In another of these acted symbols the people of Jerusalem, mangled and torn of flesh, are dumped into the rusted and filthy pot of their own city, under which the fire of Babylon's siege is burning. Again the reunion of Judah and Israel is symbolized by joining two rods together. On one occasion the prophet drank hurriedly and appeared to be completely terror-stricken, thus denoting the suddenness of the terror that would overtake the city's inhabitants. Just before the fall of Jerusalem his wife died. He refrained from all outward manifestations of grief, an unheard-of thing in the Orient, as a token that the sorrows soon to come upon Israel would be too deep for tears. When no form of mimic action would serve his purpose Ezekiel took advantage of the latitude allowed him by the imagery of visions. In all this he led the way for later Judaism, which did much of its thinking in symbols and signs. Significant associations gathered for it about the objects of the Temple: the candlestick, the shewbread, the curtain, the incense, the altars, the Holy of Holies and the Ark of the Covenant. In apocalyptic literature every material thing becomes a representative of some spiritual truth. Nor is symbolism absent from the New Testament, especially the book of Hebrews. To Christians the Lord's Supper is a symbol of the presence and love of God. Canon Streeter, who is a warm defender of the uses of symbolism, calls Jesus the "representative symbol of the Divine."

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[9] The Hebrew *almah* may mean either a young married woman or a virgin. Here it undoubtedly means a married woman. When the Bible was translated into the Greek *almah* was rendered by *parthenos,* which means a virgin. Christian thought seized upon this passage as a prophecy of the virgin birth of Jesus, not realizing that Isaiah was merely coining an illustration intended for didactic purposes, referring only to the current historical situation.

4. Dramatic Visions

The Hebrew word *hozeh* comes from a verb meaning to gaze. In the Arabic its meaning is to see a vision.

The Hebrew word *nabi* means one who speaks for another. These words came to be used interchangeably as synonymous designations for a prophet. As we become intimately acquainted with the visions of the prophets we ourselves come near to "that ineffable prophetic experience from which emerges the authoritative conviction that God himself puts his words into the prophet's mouth." [10] The prophet, like the mystic, is subject to experiences and visions which supply him with a unique and commanding message. Both the prophet and the mystic have visions and become convinced that the message given to them in the vision is from a divine source and therefore of binding authority. The prophet, then, is a mystic whose visions possess for him divine significance. This conviction, which is profoundly true, connects the prophets with the poets and creative geniuses of the race.

Both the prophet and the poet are in a sense laid hold on by the Deity or the Muse, and become the channel of a message not their own. They may be said to be the passive recipients of truth which comes from outside themselves. In our dreams, thoughts and pictures cross the mind which impress us as alien. They are classed as symbols and visions, just because they are foreign to our normal states of consciousness, and cannot, therefore readily be associated with the rest of our ideas. The meanings which become attached to these symbols and visions are related to the experience of the subject, but in a way which is not at once apparent. This does not mean, of course, that anyone ever has a vision containing anything which is wholly unrelated to the rest of the contents of his mind. Many of the poets have been in a dreamy state when they produced their best work. Coleridge saw the entire picture given in the poem of "Kubla Khan" in a daydream. He was disturbed in the midst of writing it down and when he attempted to resume it the picture had faded, never to become clear again. Much of Keats' best work was produced while he was in a trance-like condition.

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[10] E. W. Hines, "The Prophet as Mystic," *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature,* Vol. XL, p. 41.

Visions differ from ordinary daydreams in their creative significance. They proceed from that "no man's land" between waking and sleeping, when the mind is singularly free and richly creative. Peter's vision on the housetop is probably a case in point. Poe, who was peculiarly susceptible to singular moments of literary inspiration, speaks of them as "psychical fancies" arising in the soul "at those points of time where the confines of the waking world blend with those of the world of dreams." Happy inspirations of this kind undoubtedly have come to the mystically-minded religious geniuses of all time, which they have been unable to share because of their incommunicable nature. Genung wisely says, "A vision to be made intelligible to others must be visualized, that is, put into terms of sense perception. . . . Beyond the sensible image there is an inner meaning, which can be apprehended only as the vision awakens in the one to whom it is told, a spiritual state similar to that of the teller. . . . The vital image is the symbol." [11]

VISIONS OF A CALL TO SERVICE

Isaiah's Call, Isaiah 6.
Ezekiel's Vision, Ezekiel, chaps. 1, 2.
The Call of Amos, Amos 7:7-9.
The Temptation of Jesus, Matthew 4:1-11.
Peter's Vision at Joppa, Acts 10.
Saul's Call on the Way to Damascus, Acts 9:1-9,
    chaps. 22, 26.

The above visions have this element in common: they all exerted a formative influence over the future of their recipients. They differ in respect to the circumstances of their occurrence, their symbolism and literary form, and the temperaments of the men receiving them. The vision experienced by Jesus removed the obstacles in his path of service set up by a threefold temptation to fame, power and wealth. Peter's vision opened his hitherto blind mind to the fact that the old Jewish monopoly of the law did not apply to the stewardship of the gospel. Paul's vision changed his career and transformed for him the Jesus of Nazareth, whom he hated most, into the Christ whom he loved best.

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[11] J. F. Genung, *Guidebook to Biblical Literature,* p. 668.

Isaiah's vision occurred in the year that King Uzziah died, which was some time between 740 and 736 B.C. During the king's long and successful reign Palestine's boundaries had been extended and commerce had flourished, but the many wars had made the taxes increasingly heavy and more and more burdensome upon the poor peasants. Immorality was prevalent, Baal worship had spread, the sanctities of the home had suffered, and the upper classes had lulled themselves into a deadening self-complacency. Because Jotham, the weak son of Uzziah, was about to take the throne, Judah's destiny hung in the balance. Isaiah was a young man at this critical time. He came of a noble family, was a citizen of Jerusalem, possessed a good mind, rare energy and force, a deep spiritual nature, and he was intimately acquainted with his nation's leaders and problems. One day when he had gone to the Temple as usual to worship, he became suddenly aware of the presence of God hovering majestically above the Temple with its half-heathen rites, surrounded by the seraphim or six-winged heavenly beings who symbolized absolute purity. In this presence his anguish over his nation's guilt and his conviction that the demands of a holy and righteous God must be moral in their nature, aroused in him a sense of mission so strong that his consciousness of his own unfitness for the office of a prophet could not stand against it.

Ezekiel, who was among the first Jewish exiles taken to Babylonia, experienced his "vision of God" by the river Chebar in 593 B.C. As a youth of a sensitive and idealistic nature he had lived through the Deuteronomic reform—a movement which should have culminated in peace and blessing to his people. Instead, one disaster followed another and finally the crowning disgrace of captivity. How could this tragic incongruity be explained? Was Yahweh so angry with His people that he had forsaken them utterly? In this marvelous theophanic vision Ezekiel was reassured. Yahweh appeared, seated on a movable throne which could travel chariot-like either upon the ground or through the air. When interpreted this meant that Yahweh was not confined to Jerusalem or the boundaries of Palestine but was able to accompany His people and protect them even in lands dedicated to the worship of foreign gods. The living creatures which supported the throne were similar in form to human beings, only they had two pairs of wings and four faces, those of a man, a lion, an ox and an eagle, which may have been intended to symbolize intelligence, majesty, strength, and swiftness. The vision pictured the scope of Yahweh's power as universal and all things as visible to Him.

The visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel reveal certain wide differences. Isaiah's were the simpler, Ezekiel's the more complex. Isaiah was the more active of the two in public affairs, Ezekiel the more mystical and subjective. Isaiah received his call in the city and spent his days at the court; Ezekiel received this theophany on the banks of the river, where he spent his time with the little community of captives, whom he served as pastor. Simpler than the visions of either was the call of the rugged Amos, which was merely a glimpse of God setting a plumb line against the wall—a symbol of justice.

Didactic Visions

Rhapsody of Zion Redeemed, Isaiah, chaps 40-56.
The Valley of Dry Bones, Ezekiel 37:1-14.
The Siege, Ezekiel 4:1-5:4.
Vision of the Restored Community, Ezekiel 43:1-10.
Zechariah's Seven-fold Vision, Zechariah 1:8-6:8.
The New Jerusalem, Revelation 21:1-22:5.

Ezekiel's portrayal of the "Siege of Jerusalem" was formerly regarded as a fiction invented by the prophet for its symbolic significance, but it is now generally agreed that it is a recital of a vision. This releases us from the burden of believing that the prophet actually lay on one side for three hundred and ninety days and on the other for forty days.

"The Valley of Dry Bones" is one of the simplest and most effective of these didactic visions of Ezekiel's. It was given for the benefit of the captives in Babylon and the restoration with which it is concerned is not individual but national. The great question in the minds of the exiles was, How could Yahweh's promises to Israel be fulfilled now that the nation was living in bonds under the jurisdiction of other gods? Ezekiel's answer was that the sway of Yahweh extended to these other lands and that He would raise up a new nation from the scattered remnants of His people. It is worth noting that he expected the Northern Kingdom also to participate in this national restoration. The boldness of his thought is impressive, his optimism is well founded and carefully sustained, and his reading of Yahweh's purpose is clear and sure.

In form and diction this vision is a master literary effort. Few of those for whom he wrote it would be so devoid of imagination as not to take a live interest in the reassembling of the dry bones, the appearance again of muscles and sinews, and the advent of the new lease of life. Who has not seen the first stirrings of reanimation in a "dead" community through the efforts of some local man of vision?

Zechariah was an associate of Haggai the prophet, in the reign of Zerubbabel, governor of the restored Jewish community and rebuilder of the Temple, which was begun in 520 and dedicated in 516 B.C. The prophecies of Zechariah were delivered during the years 520 to 518. The leaders of Judah had hoped that Zerubbabel might prove to be the Davidic prince for whom the nation was looking as its emancipator, but they were destined to disappointment. The object of these visions is to reanimate this hope for freedom from Persia.

ZECHARIAH'S VISIONS

The Horses; God's Promise of Comfort, Zechariah 1:7-17.
The Horns; God's Promise to Destroy the Foes, Zechariah 1:18-21.
Restoration of Jerusalem, Zechariah 2:1-13.
Filth of a Foreign Nation in Jerusalem, Zechariah 3:1-10.
The Lamp and the Olive Trees, Zechariah 4:1-14.
The Flying Roll, Zechariah 5:1-4.
The Woman in the Measure, Zechariah 5:5-11.
The Four Chariots, Zechariah 6:1-8.

For a discussion of the visions contained in Isaiah, chapters 40-56, the reader is referred to Moulton's *The Literary Study of the Bible.*[12]

FOR STUDY AND COMPARISON

Among modern writers Browning developed the dramatic monologue to the highest degree of perfection. His work is remarkably similar in spirit and technique to that of the psalmists. He, himself, explained that his dramatic lyrics, "though often lyric in expression, always dramatic in principle, [are] so many utterances of so many imaginative persons, not mine." This is an exact description of some of the biblical dramatic passages. Among the best examples of Browning's dramatic lyrics are "The Confessional" and "Two in the Campagna." Close kin to these are "Fra Lippo Lippi," "Andrea del Sarto" and "Abt Vogler," though Browning did not include them in his list. Tennyson made use of a similar literary form in "Ulysses," "Tithonius" and "Rizpah."

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[12] Moulton, *The Literary Study of the Bible,* chap. 19.

In Sully-Prudhomme's "The Broken Vase" and Baudelaire's "The Cracked Bell" we have modern examples of symbols in poetry.

VISIONS

ADDISON, JOSEPH, "The Vision of Mirza," *Spectator* No. 159.
BLAKE, WILLIAM, "Heaven and Hell" and "Memorable Fancies."
COLERIDGE, SAMUEL T., "Kubla Khan."
DANTE, ALIGHIERI, "The Vision of the Mystic Rose," Cantos 30 f., *Paradiso*.
PHILLIPS, STEPHEN, "Christ in Hades."

DISCUSSION TOPICS AND EXERCISES

1. What are the tests of good drama?
2. What are the values of drama, tableaux, and symbolism as teaching mediums? Suggest Bible incidents which offer good materials for modern tableaux and interpretative symbolism.
3. What is the secret of the appeal of the initiation ceremonies and the ritual of secret organizations?
4. Make a study of several religious mystics, such as Augustine, Catherine of Siena, St. Francis, and then compare them with the prophets.
5. Discuss and compare psychologically the visions of the mystics, the exalted creative states of the poets, and the intuition of the scientists.
6. Show the relation between Peter's vision and certain of his subsequent acts. Trace the mental steps in his reception of Cornelius.
7. Dramatize Isaiah's call, Isaiah 6.
8. Dramatize Revelation, giving acts, scenes, dramatis personæ, and choruses. For a fuller discussion of Revelation see chapter X, section 3.

Books to Consult

Bewer, J. A., *The Literature of the Old Testament,* see Index.

Genung, J. F., *Guidebook to Biblical Literature,* pp. 668-677.

Gordon, A. R., *The Prophets of the Old Testament,* Chaps. 5, 7, 20, 21.

Hines, E. W., "The Prophet as Mystic," *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature,* Vol. XI.

James, William, *Varieties of Religious Experience,* Chaps. 16, 17.

Kent, C. F., *The Sermons, Epistles, and Apocalypses of Israel's Prophets,* Introd. I and II.

Matthews, Brander, *A Study of the Drama,* Chap. 1.

Moulton, R. G., *The Literary Study of the Bible,* Chaps. 7, 18, 19.

Prescott, F. C., *The Poetic Mind,* Chap. 2.

Smith, J. M. P., *The Prophet and His Times,* Chap. 1.

CHAPTER XIII

THE WISE MEN OF THE EAST

1. Maxims and Proverbs

Solomon is the best known of the sages of the East, but his wisdom did not differ in kind from that of the wise men generally, of Arabia, Persia, or Egypt. The making of aphorisms was a favorite pastime among Oriental peoples. The quiet contemplative life of Egypt furnished a congenial atmosphere in which sages throve, and the fruits of their meditation were stored in a literature that has survived to the present day. The Babylonians and Assyrians likewise coined pungent apothegms, which were handed on from generation to generation. The Hebrew tradition honors Solomon and Hezekiah as the authors of wise sayings, and the "wisdom of the children of the East" is referred to by the editor of Kings.[1] Wit, versatility and similar accomplishments were much prized elements in Oriental culture; "Let the wise, the learned, meditate together."

The antiquity of proverbial sayings is very great and among most peoples their origin is unknown. "They were anterior to books," says Disraeli, "and formed the wisdom of the vulgar, and in the earliest ages were the unwritten laws of morality." Since many of them antedate the written literature of peoples it is unsafe to assume that the earliest known record of a saying indicates the time of its origin. Five hundred years before Paul journeyed to Damascus, Pindar, the lyric poet, penned the words, "It is hard for thee to kick against the goad."

[1] I Kings 4:30. For references to Egyptian and Babylonian proverbs see J. M. P. Smith, *Moral Life of the Hebrews*, p. 245.

The fables of Æsop, who lived a little before Pindar, in many instances were no more than amplifications of previously existing proverbs. Many sayings common to-day were known to Solon and the Seven Sages of Greece. Thales, a Greek philosopher who lived three hundred years after Solomon, listed some of the same aphorisms as the Hebrew king. More remarkable still is the fact that Ptah-hotep, three thousand years before Christ, used many of the maxims which found their way into the lore of younger peoples.

Although proverbs express the philosophy of the unlettered, they scarcely deserve the slurring statement of Chesterfield that they were the flowers of rhetoric of vulgar men and the companions of bad company. A sententious saying may spring Athena-like from the brain of a wise man, but it does not become a proverb until it is made such by common repetition.[2] Franklin was not so much the author as the compiler of the sayings in *Poor Richard's Almanac.* He, himself, tells us that those sayings represent "the wisdom of many ages and nations." Solomon's name became so associated with wisdom that the tendency among the Hebrews and related peoples was to attribute all proverbs to him.

The object of a sententious saying or maxim is clearly apparent. In the introduction to the *Instruction of Ptah-hotep,* the ancient Egyptian sage says that he wishes to "speak to his son the words of those who hearken to the men of olden times," to the end that he may "instruct the ignorant in the exact knowledge of fair speaking." In literature of this type the "wise man" is presented as perfection itself, but the condemnation reserved for the "fool" and his vice and folly is pitiless. The virtues inculcated are all homespun, such as self-control, justice, filial piety, thrift, diligence, and faithfulness, which follow the golden mean and conform to conventional usages and customs. Clear judgment, sagacity, and resourcefulness are highly commended; such, for example, was the wisdom which Solomon showed in determining which of the two petitioning women was the real mother of the baby in dispute.[8] A similar story is related of an Arabian judge, called to determine which of two women charged with shamelessness was the guilty one. After listening to all that the various parties in interest had to offer he said, "Let her who is innocent of the charge throw aside her garment and stand before me naked." One of them unhesitatingly did so, but the other threw herself on the ground and cried, "Slay me instead." For the most part these Oriental maxims keep to the level of the ethics of the court and the market place, the conventional morality of the day. They have been called "the crystallization of the practical wisdom of the people."

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[2] The following is an example of the social origin of proverbs. In the olden times pigs were sold in the market places in pokes (bags). Dishonest traders often palmed off something else as a substitute, such as a cat. Thus arose the saying, "Never buy a pig in a poke." A shrewd customer opened the poke of such a dishonest trader and out jumped a cat, so he "let the cat out of the bag."

This fondness for concise aphoristic statements of truth finds daily illustration among Orientals. They have a proverb to fit almost any situation which may arise. In Turkey perjury in legal actions is so common as to be taken for granted. Of such witnesses they remark, "When a man has bread in his mouth he cannot speak." After once hearing the saying of the Arabs, "Coffee should be as sweet as love, as bitter as jealousy, as black as the grave and as hot as hell," one does not often drink the social cup without being reminded of it. Our own after-dinner speakers seem to love to keep on talking, but in the East brevity is both the soul of wit and the test of wisdom. Legend has it that Ptolemy Philadelphus, the wise ruler of Egypt, at a banquet which he gave in honor of the seventy Jewish scribes who had come to Egypt to translate the Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek, asked them to state the *summum bonum* of life in one sentence. The seventy sentences are the distilled wisdom of seventy wise and cultured men. The story is told of a student who could not decide whether to study under Hillel or Shammai, two of the greatest rabbis of their time, that as a test he asked them in turn to give him an epitome of the whole law while standing on one foot. Shammai replied that it could not be done, but Hillel promptly responded: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all they mind, heart, soul, and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself." Hillel won the student by his citation of this most noble summary of religion.

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[8] I Kings 3:16-28.

The formative influence of proverbs and wise sayings over the lives of men has been most marked. Motley declares that *Poor Richard's Almanac* exercised an influence almost biblical in strength in molding the character of the young in the early decades of our national life and in enabling the people to bear with fortitude the trials of the Revolution. Sir William Sterling-Maxwell reminds us that "the qualities which have shaped the destiny of Scotland are those which are mainly inculcated in her proverbs." The story of Bruce's spider, he adds, "often baffled, never disheartened, and finally successful, pervades nearly the whole of our proverbial philosophy." John Knox had many biblical proverbs at his tongue's end, and the writings of Jeremy Taylor are profusely sprinkled with them. John Ruskin considered his familiarity with the Old Testament book of Proverbs as "the most precious and, on the whole, essential part of my education."

The Hebrews called a proverb a *mashal,* a term which includes also fables, parables, and allegories. It consists of some likeness or comparison and favors a condensed style and balanced structure. In the later Hebrew writings pithy sayings of this kind were collected and grouped about a common theme, such as Fools or Sluggards. The proverb in couplet verse is valued for its point and phrasing, rather than for its emotional warmth. A good example of this couplet form is the Spanish proverb "Plow deep and you will have plenty of corn," which reappears rhymed in English as,

Plow deep while sluggards sleep
And you will have corn to sell and keep.

Possibly the proverb, "Out of the wicked cometh forth wickedness," in I Samuel 24:13, is the germ of the later *mashal:*

The soul of the wicked desireth evil;
His neighbor findeth no favor in his eyes.[4]

Proverbs like "Is Saul among the prophets?" are no doubt by-products of some historical incident.[5] The primary form of the *mashal* is best seen in a similitude, for example:

As cold water is to a thirsty man
So is good news from a far country.

A sharper edge is given to some proverbs by instituting a comparison between man and some animal, bird, or insect, such as "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise." Other proverbs were originally riddles. Proverbs 16:24 may have been suggested by the question, "What is as sweet as honey?" to which the answer was "Pleasant discourse, for it is sweet to the soul and medicine to the bones." "Meddling with a quarrel not your own" may have been some wit's answer to the riddle, "What is like seizing a dog by the ears?" In time the question was forgotten and the rule of conduct alone remembered.

The later wisdom literature is a clear advance upon the earlier in religious depth and philosophic insight. In the Wisdom of Solomon, written near the beginning of the present era (50 B.C. to 10 A.D.), which is the forerunner of Philo's philosophy, clear contacts appear with Greek thinking. In Philo the Wisdom concept of the Jews is almost perfectly identified with the Greek Logos, or divine intelligence. God is spoken of as the husband of Wisdom. Wisdom is related to God as the Idea in Plato is related to the ultimate reality. Wisdom is the creative principle and it pervades all things.

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[4] Proverbs 21:10.

[5] I Samuel 10:11.

> For she is the breath of the power of God,
> And a clear effulgence of the glory of the Almighty.

The same form continues to be used in this later literature as in the earlier proverbs, but in exchange for the practical and utilitarian nature of the earlier precepts we are asked to concern ourselves with deeper realities. These writings come as near to classification as philosophical literature as anything which the Jewish people produced. They served as a bridge between Greek philosophy and their own native thought. Jesus often cast his thoughts in this same form of condensed saying, but to the philosophy of the wise man he added the fervent vision of the prophet.

2. The Book of Proverbs

The book of Proverbs as it now stands was probably compiled during the Greek period of Judaism; it bears unmistakable traces of Greek and Persian influences. While the sayings seem to have been strung together in a haphazard way, six different titles at intervals in the book serve to indicate more or less distinct groups. The compiler's one purpose throughout is to develop and advocate the adoption of a true conception of wisdom. The proverbs are universally applicable. They contain no stumblingblocks to the Gentile in the way of allusions to the history of Israel and the messianic hope; the names "Israel," "Temple" and "Priest" are not mentioned and the God of their discourse is not the Yahweh of Israel alone, but the God of the whole world. Some of the more characteristic groups of sayings are.

Wisdom and Her Precepts, chaps. 1-9

These sayings are precepts on the need of men for wisdom and the fear of the Lord. In Proverbs the "fear of the Lord" is a synonym for religion. Wisdom sometimes speaks as if she were personified as a lady (e.g., chap. 8), though many doubt that there is true personification. In chapter 7 folly is represented as a harlot. Like the choice set before Hercules in the Greek legend, youth is here asked to choose between wisdom and folly.[6]

Observations on Nature, 30:15-31, 6:6-10

Chapter 30 contains the sayings of Agur, of whom we knew nothing else. But the sayings show a keen sense of the beauty and mystery of life in its common manifestations:

> There are three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not:
>
> The way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid.

He makes another comparison which may originally have been an answer to a riddle:

> The horse-leach hath two daughters crying, Give, give. There are three things which are never satisfied, yea, four things say not, It is enough: the grave, the barren womb, the earth that is not filled with water, and the fire that saith not, It is enough.

He draws upon the animal world to drive home the wisdom of preparedness, the wisdom of safety, the wisdom of coöperation, and the wisdom of beauty:

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[6] "As when a door is shut it cannot be seen what is within the house; so the mouth being shut up by silence, the folly that is within lieth undiscovered; and as in glasses and vessels so in men, the sound which they make showeth whether they be cracked or sound. An ass is known by his ears (says the Dutch proverb) so is a fool by his talk. As a bird is known by his note and a bell by his clapper, so is a man by his discourse."

—John Trapp.

> The are four things that are little upon the earth that are exceeding wise:
>
> The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in summer; the conies are but a feeble folk, yet make their houses in the rocks; the locusts have no king, yet they go forth all of them by bands; the spider you take with your hands yet she is in king's palaces.

The Capable versus the Contentious Woman, 31:10-31

This description of the ideal woman is unsurpassed. Her sphere is her home and family; her virtues are those of the capable, energetic, thrifty housewife and mother. Its complete silence in regard to social or intellectual attainments is disappointing to us, but its standards of moral excellence are high. The opposite type of woman is also well described:

> A continual dropping on a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike (27:15).

Industry versus Laziness, 22:29; 24:30-34; 26:13-16; 12:24, 28; 6:6-11

Diligence is here identified with wisdom, and laziness with folly or wickedness. Admirers of Benjamin Franklin will recall his frequent use of the saying, "Seest thou a man diligent in his business he shall stand before kings" (22:29).

Integrity and Self-control, 11:1-8; 20:23-28

Many of the finest proverbs defy classification. The breeziness of the modern back-slapper is rightly appraised in

> He that blesseth his friend in a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be a curse to him.

The practical joker is dismissed with

> So is the man that deceiveth his neighbor, and saith, Am I not in sport?

Or the false friend,

> Confidence in an unfaithful friend in time of trouble is like a broken tooth and a foot out of joint.

The disastrous experience of Ulysses in his encounter with the sirens—and of many other men—is voiced in

> He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.

Beauty and insight form a perfect blend in the saying,

> Where there is no vision the people perish.

3. THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

Luther called this book "an epistle of straw" because it over-exalted good works, as he thought, at the expense of faith. Probably a similar evaluation of it kept it for a time out of the canon, for Eusebius in 325 A.D. said that the position of James was still in dispute. It is a somewhat forensic document with enough good-natured cynicism to make it pungent, and enough Greek philosophy to merit its condemnation in the eyes of some critics in the early church. On maturer thought, however, the book received an honored place in Christian literature. Its respect for the poor and its lofty, almost Amos-like, note of social justice are genuinely Christian in their appeal. There is also a healthy tonic quality in its insistence that faith must produce good works: "What is the good of a man saying he has faith if he has no good deeds to show?" The modern man finds its note of utter reality and its hatred of sham, snobbishness and hypocrisy very congenial.

This epistle is written in the style found in maxims and proverbs. There are fifty-four imperatives in advocacy of virtue in a total of one hundred and eight verses. Practical as its injunctions are the book is full of imagery. The first chapter contains at least eight suggestive figures of speech. The doubter is pictured as being "like the surge of the sea"; God is one with whom there can be no "variation neither shadow of turning." Other familiar figures are "the flower of the grass" and "the man who beholdeth his natural face in a mirror." The style is chaste and beautiful, the work of a writer with a sympathetic nature. While the material is not closely knit together there is some unity and progress in the thought. The theme of the book is conduct as the principal thing in life:

Conduct under trial, 1:1-18.
Action is the test of character, 1:19-27.
Conduct toward the rich and the poor, chap. 2.
The tongue as a revealer of character, 3:1-22.
Wisdom is shown by conduct, 3:13-5:6.

The student should read the entire book carefully. He will come upon such gems as this:

> Pure and undefiled religion before our God and father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

4. THE SAYINGS OF JESUS

Although Jesus used the characteristic *mashal* of the Hebrews as a vehicle for most of his teaching, we do not ordinarily think of him as one of the "wise men." He displayed a prophetic fire, a depth of passion, and an insight into the divine will, conspicuously absent in the wisdom literature. Nevertheless, his sayings are so pungent and pithy, so penetrating and picturesque that they invite comparison with these maxims:

THE BEATITUDES OR RULES OF HAPPINESS[7]

Blessed are those who feel their spiritual need,
    for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them!
Blessed are the mourners,
    for they will be consoled!
Blessed are the humble-minded,
    for they will possess the land!

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[7] Matthew 5:3-12; Goodspeed's translation. Compare with Moffatt.

Blessed are those who are hungry and thirsty for uprightness,
for they will be satisfied!
Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy!
Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God!
Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called God's sons!
Blessed are those who have endured persecution for their uprightness,
for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them!

President King has compiled what he calls "The World's Code" for obtaining happiness:[8]

Happy are the proud,
for theirs is the world.
Happy are the unscrupulous,
for they shall need no comfort.
Happy are those who claim everything,
for they shall possess the earth.
Happy are those who hold back from no sin,
for they shall drain pleasure's cup.
Happy are the tyrants,
for they need no mercy.
Happy are the impure, to whose lust no bound can be put,
for they shall see many harlots.
Happy are they who can stir anger unhindered,
whose ambition is unchecked,
for they shall be as gods.
Happy are they who have never sacrificed,
for theirs is all the world.

The sayings of Jesus found in the *Oxyrhynchus Fragment*[9] are, for the most part, similar in tone to those in the gospels. One, however, is unique:

> Wherever there are two they are not without God, and wherever there is one alone, I say, I am with him. Raise the stone and there thou shalt find me; cleave the wood and there am I.

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[8] King, H. C., *The Ethics of Jesus.*

[9] Grenfell, Drexel and Hunt, *New Sayings of Jesus from Oxyrhynchus,* Oxford University Press. Discovered 1897.

Counterparts to many of the proverb-like sayings of Jesus are to be found among other peoples. A few examples will serve to illustrate:[10]

Physician, heal thyself (Jesus).
Before healing others, heal thyself (Wolofs of West Africa).
The doctor has a ringworm on his own nose (Assamese).
If you can pull out, pull out your own gray hairs (Oji of Africa).
The Panre [teacher] would teach others but he himself stumbles (Behar, India).
Paltry physicians we pretend to heal other's diseases yet are not able to heal our own (Servius Sulpicius in a letter to Cicero).

Jesus' saying, "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye and considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye," has such parallels as the following:

He sees the speck in another's eye but does not see the film in his own eye (Hindustani).
Dirty-nosed folk always want to wipe other folks' noses (French).
Sweep the snow from your own door and mind not the frost on your neighbor's tiles (Chinese).
Take the pestle from your own eye and then the mote from another's (Marathi).

Numerous proverbs on the general theme of the pot calling the kettle black might be added.

Jesus' counsel to turn the other cheek is approximated in the Spanish proverb, "He who gives the second blow begins the quarrel." The Bengalese speak of "blind torch-bearers" much as Jesus speaks of the blind leading the blind. Jesus' saying about the prophet being without honor in his own country is echoed in the Hindustani saying, "A Jogee is called a Jogra in his own village, but one from another village is called a Sidh."

For Study and Comparison

The Wisdom of Jesus, the Son of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus).
The Wisdom of Solomon.

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[10] For many examples of the same thing see D. E. Marvin, *The Antiquity of Proverbs.*

The Instruction of Ptah-hotep,[11] Wisdom of the East Series, London.
The Writings of Confucius.
Poor Richard's Almanac.
Proverbs of Other Nations.

The reader will find it of interest to make his own collection of proverbs and maxims, for which the above list offers worthy materials. The *Instruction of Ptah-hotep* has an antiquarian as well as literary interest and will repay study. Some of the best selections from Confucius may be found in the *Harvard Classics.* The first two works, mentioned above, belong to the Apocrypha. The first, which is commonly referred to as the Wisdom of Ben Sira, is a guidebook to right living, and was written by Ben Sira in Egypt between 200 and 175 B.C. It shows traces of the influence of Ecclesiastes and was produced under the same cultural conditions. The author praises wisdom and culture, holds man and his freedom of will in high esteem, probes deeply into his own experiences, enjoins the virtues and presents a high standard of moral and religious ideals. It is a worthy work.

The Wisdom of Solomon is a more philosophic piece of writing, close kin in its thought to the Platonic and Heraclitean ideas. It prepared the way for Philo. Perhaps its most elevated passage is the apostrophe to Wisdom:

For there is in her a spirit quick of understanding, holy.
Alone in kind, manifold, subtil, freely moving,
Clear in utterance, unpolluted, distinct, unharmed,
Loving what is good, keen, unhindered,
Beneficent, loving toward man,
Steadfast, pure, free from care,
All-powerful, all-surveying, and penetrating through all spirits
That are quick of understanding, pure and most subtil.

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[11] On Egyptian proverbs see a valuable discussion by Professor Dunsmore, "An Egyptian Contribution to the Book of Proverbs," *The Journal of Religion,* Vol. V, No. 3, May, 1925.

For Wisdom is more mobile than any motion;
For she pervadeth and penetrateth all things by reason of her
pureness.
For she is a breath of the power of God,
And a clear effulgence of the glory of the Almighty;
Therefore can nothing defiled find entrance into her.
For she is an effulgence from everlasting light,
And an unspotted mirror of the working of God,
And an image of his goodness,
And she being one hath power to do all things,
And remaining in herself reneweth all things.[12]

Discussion Topics and Exercises

1. What are the various meanings denoted by the word "wisdom"? What Greek idea or term corresponded to the word *wisdom* as used among the Jews? What is meant by "The Fear of the Lord"?
2. Give reasons for the popularity of proverbs?
3. What are the principal ethical ideals of the book of Proverbs? James?
4. Compare the ethical teachings of *The Instruction of Ptah-hotep* with those of the Old Testament.
5. Wherein lies the originality of Jesus if common and well-known sayings constituted so much of his teaching?

Books to Consult

Bewer, J. A., *The Literature of the Old Testament,* Chap. 19.
Fowler, H. T., *A History of the Literature of Ancient Israel,* Chap. 24.
Genung, J. F., *Guidebook to Biblical Literature,* pp. 448-462.
Gordon, A. R., *Poets of the Old Testament,* Chaps. 15, 16, 17.
Kent, C. F., *Student's Old Testament,* Vol. VI, pp. 3-32, 45-110.
Moulton, R. G., *Literary Study of the Bible,* Book V, Chaps. 13, 14, 15.
Phelps, William L., *Human Nature in the Bible,* Chap. 11.
Wood and Grant, *The Bible as Literature,* Chap. 23.

Among collections of proverbs may be mentioned:

Lawson, J. G., *The World's Great Proverbs and Maxims.*
Marvin, D. E., *The Antiquity of Proverbs.*
Plopper, C. H., *The Chinese Religion seen through Proverbs.*

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[12] The Wisdom of Solomon, 7:22-27; see the Apocrypha, Revision of 1894.

CHAPTER XIV

THE ROMANTIC CYNIC

1. THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

THE jaded Roman emperor who said, "I have tried everything and nothing is of any use," was full brother to a certain worldly wise man of the Hebrews who summed up all his experience of life in the epigram, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." The book of Ecclesiastes is certainly the most unecclesiastical book in the Bible. Its author calls himself *Koheleth,* usually translated "The Preacher," but he wears the cloth rather lightly, for of moral passion and earnestness he shows hardly a trace. Quite unlike a Darrow who summons all his powers to prove that man is nothing but a machine, this author hardly puts forth much of an effort to prove anything. The book is neither as pious as the Jews thought it was, nor as melancholy as some recent critics would have us believe; its author is not a philosopher of pessimism, but neither is he a teacher of morality or a prophet of righteousness. His is a relatively mild type of cynicism, marked not by despair but by ennui, not by profound gloom but by pity for those who take life too seriously. It lacks the depth of the *Maya* (cosmic illusion) doctrine of Hindu philosophy; life for it is a fleeting panorama and therefore the wisest course to follow is the line of least resistance. Such brilliant critics as Heine and Renan have declared Ecclesiastes to be the finest thing ever written by a Jew.

Ecclesiastes is a product of the darkest and most corrupt period of Jewish national history. Israel had fallen under the weak and tyrannical rule of upstart monarchs who parceled out the provinces among cruel and rapacious satraps. In 198 B.C. Antiochus the Great, who became king of Syria when seven years of age, wrested Palestine from Ptolemy V of Egypt. If scholars are correct in their interpretation, Ecclesiastes 10:16, 17 expresses the enthusiasm of the Jews at this change of masters over their storm-tossed land. For a century Palestine had been a bone of contention between Syria and Egypt. Jewish tax-collectors, appointed by these foreign governors, fattened upon their fellow countrymen who thoroughly despised them for it. It was a selfish and sordid age, in which the national spirit of Israel lay crushed and the Jews saw only the corrupt and seamy side of civilization. We are certain that the book must have been written as early as 180 B.C., for this is the accepted date of the "Wisdom of Ben Sira," references to which are to be found in Ecclesiastes.[1]

In that period of Hebrew literature it was the common custom for a writer to credit the authorship of his work to some ancient worthy. The crediting of the authorship of Ecclesiastes to "Koheleth, the Son of David, King in Jerusalem," is an obvious instance of this practice. In the first place no Son of David or any other king bore the name of Koheleth. Again *Koheleth* is not a Hebrew word form which would ever be used as the name of an individual. The nearest equivalent of the Hebrew term seems to be "professor" or "lecturer," especially one who speaks before an assembly composed of seekers after wisdom. When the term was translated into Greek it took the form Ecclesiastes, from the root *ecclesia,* "assembly," which in Christian usage stands for the church.

The author was evidently a man of active mind and a shrewd observer, who adopted a frankly skeptical attitude toward life. Jastrow calls him a "gentle cynic," for he did not condemn all of life nor was he bitter about it. As life's ups and downs passed in review before him, its allurements and temptations, its successes and failures, its illusions and grim realities, he came to the conclusion that it was all folly and futility. No matter what one sets one's heart on too seriously, his failure to achieve it was the source of acute distress. The author has been called an Epicurean, but surely he was not the voluptuary who sought to drown "the unborn Tomorrow and the dead Yesterday" in the ancient ruby of the vine. Instead, he was a serious thinker who had imbibed much of the Greek spirit, although he remained at heart a Hebrew. He had the practical cast of those who live in "one world at a time," and although he sympathized with those who sorrow as the victims of cruel fate he had no better prospects to offer them in another world. He was one of the world's melancholy romantics, those tired-out people who have let the fires of interest in life go almost completely out.

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[1] On this dependence see Plumptre, *Ecclesiastes,* Cambridge Bible, p. 56.

The writer must have been past middle age. He had experimented as much as he cared to with life in all its phases. He seems to have been a man of great wealth (2:1-8) who had used his riches for his personal gratification. Whatever he had done with his life it had not brought him sound sleep (5:12) nor won him friends, nor do his experiences with women seem to have turned out to his satisfaction. Though he had kept in the middle and safer path and had not sapped his vitality by excesses, yet he must have reached the time of life where he felt that his powers had begun to wane. None but a man advanced in years could have written the brilliant passage in this book on the waning powers of old age. All his advice is in the negative. The style is pungent but it offers the saddest and weariest strain in the Bible.

Scholars have long been puzzled by the lack of unity in the book. Moral maxims, admonitions, and exhortations to piety are interspersed with these cynical, tentative, self-indulgent, and mildly sensual views of life. At one point (11:9) its author cavalierly bids the young man walk in the ways of his heart and in the desire of his eyes, and then suddenly turns and says by way of reminder, "but know that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." Many of the earlier scholars[2] found a key to the unity and the deepest significance of the book in the view that the author was portraying the "Two Voices" of the soul speaking alternately, the one for the higher and the other for the lower self. Stanley compares Koheleth's predicament to the struggle between the two divided selves in *Romans* or in the modern poets. He says, "It is the perpetual strophe and antistrophe of Pascal's *Pensées*. But it is more complicated, more entangled than any one of these, in proportion as the circumstances from which it grows are more perplexing, as the character which it represents is vaster and grander and more distracted. Every expression of the human heart is heard and expressed and recognized in turn."[3]

Recent scholars, however, especially Jastrow,[4] interpret its moralizings as the work of later editors who thus attempted by toning down its impiety to transform it into a preachment against sin. While the reader may not agree with Jastrow's working out of his analysis in detail, his general principle seems sound. If the moralizings be the work of the original author we can only conclude that he is woefully inconsistent. On the other hand, they are so very much like later Jewish moralizings that Jastrow's solution seems to be the natural one A cynic may, of course, experience occasional hours when he feels less contemptuous, but a stern realist does not often descend to the use of mouthy exhortations to fear God. To identify the passages expressive of the naked realism of the author it is hardly necessary for the reader to turn to the analyzed editions; he cannot fail to be sensible of the change of intellectual climate when he encounters a fresh spell of moralizing.

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[2] See E. G. Plumptre, *Ecclesiastes,* Cambridge Bible, and J. F. Genung, *Words of Koheleth.* Plumptre suggests that Shakespeare's 144th Sonnet offers a good parallel to Ecclesiastes:

Two loves I have of comfort and despair
Which, like two spirits, do suggest me still.
The better angel is a man right fair,
The worser spirit a woman colored ill.

To win me soon to hell, my female evil
Tempteth my better angel, from my side,
And would corrupt my saint to be a devil,
Wooing his purity with her foul pride."

[3] Arthur P. Stanley, *The History of the Jewish Church,* p. 282.

[4] Morris Jastrow, *The Gentle Cynic,* Introd.

Thanks, however, to these editorial interpolations and the pious mood they express, the book was finally conceded a place in the Jewish canon at the Council of Jamnia in 90 A.D. It became one of the five Megilloth and was read annually thereafter at the most joyous of the festivals, the Feast of Tabernacles. This occurred at the close of the harvest season when stock was taken of the year, its debits and credits balanced, and the gains and losses reckoned. At such times the hard-headed farmer inquires, "What profit hath man of all his labor wherewith he laboreth under the sun?" The word *profit* means to him the net result, the surplusage or gain acquired during the round of the seasons. This little classic really pivots upon this bookkeeping idea of striking a balance between the pains and pleasures of life. The cycle of the seasons would also suggest to him that life is not a progress toward a goal but the unending round of meaningless events. These questions were not asked in a spirit of despair but with a mellowing tinge of sorrow. None of us feels exactly light-hearted when we try to sum life up.

The book is mostly prose, interspersed, however, with short sections of poetry. The thought in the beginning and at the end is connected, while the middle sections almost fall apart into proverbs. In the process of appraising his experience the author subjects himself to a sort of spiritual vivisection, somewhat analogous to that found in Amiel's *Journal Intime*. The book is not obscure, in spite of the fact that it requires more careful reading than almost any other book of the Bible. A good example of the beauty of its poetic style is found in the very first chapter (verses 3-9):

What does a man gain from all his toil
Wherein he toils beneath the sun?
One generation goes and another comes,
While the earth endures perpetually.
The sun rises and the sun sets,
And hastens to the place where he arose.
The wind blows toward the south
And returns to the north.
Turning, turning, the wind blows,
And returns upon its circuit.
All rivers run to the sea,
But the sea is never full;
To the spot where the rivers flow,
There they continue to flow.
All cases would weary;
One may not tell them;
Lest the eye be sated with seeing,
And the ear be filled with hearing.
Whatsoever has been in that which will be;
And whatsoever has been done is that which
    will be done:
And there is nothing new under the sun.[5]

In the second chapter the author tells how he experimented with everything—wealth, pleasure, ambition, fame, wisdom—and, as Omar Khayyam says,

but evermore
Came out by the same door as in I went.

His was a verdict much the same as that which Byron imputes to Childe Harold:

Years steal
Fire from the mind as vigor from the limb;
And life's enchanted cup but sparkles near the brim.

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[5] From *The Old Testament, An American Translation,* p. 1103.

His had been quaffed too quickly, and he found
The days were wormwood; but he filled again,
And from a purer fount on holier ground,
And deemed its spring perpetual; but in vain![6]

Swinburne duplicates the experience and brilliantly echoes the joyless moods of Koheleth when he sings in "A Ballad of Burdens" of his vain adventures with "fair women," "bought kisses," "sweet speeches," "long living," "bright colors," "sad sayings," "four seasons," and "dead faces," and concludes:

Life and lust
Forsake thee, and the face of thy delight;
And underfoot the heavy hour strews dust;
And overhead strange weathers burn and bite;
And where the red was, lo the bloodless white,
And where the truth was the likeness of a liar,
And where the day was the likeness of the night;
This is the end of every man's desire.[7]

The third chapter considers man's helplessness in his unequal contests with nature and the circumstances of life. Dependence upon the compensations of a future life seem to him a piece of folly. In chapter nine he reaches his own conclusion that life's only wages consist in whatever enjoyment the passing hour yields. Live for the day and get all the enjoyment possible out of it, for none can tell what the future holds. We shall let the reader select his own favorite passages from the various translations,[8] except that we shall quote the incomparable description of old age (12:1-7):

> Remember also thy creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil days come and the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; before the sun, and the light, and the moon, and the stars are darkened, and the clouds return after the rain; in the day when the keepers of the house

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[6] Byron, *Childe Harold,* Canto iii, stanzas viii and ix.

[7] Charles A. Swinburne, *Poems,* "A Ballad of Burdens."

[8] *The American Standard Version,* Smith, *The Old Testament, An American Translation;* and Morris Jastrow, *The Gentle Cynic,* are recommended.

> shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders shall cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows shall be darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the street; when the sound of the grinding is low, and one shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low; yea, they shall be afraid of that which is high, and terrors shall be in the way; and the almond tree shall blossom, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail; because man goeth to his long home and the mourners go about the streets; before the silver cord is loosed or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern, and the dust returneth to the earth as it was, and the spirit returneth unto God who gave it. Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, all is vanity.

This passage owes much of its beauty to its swiftly flowing metaphors. Some interpreters regard them as symbols of the body and milestones marking the oncoming decrepitude of old age. The "keepers of the house" denote the ribs or hips; the "strong men" are the legs; the grinders are the teeth, and the windows the eyes. "The doors shall be shut in the streets," may refer to the hardness of hearing which comes on all too often in old age. The reference in "the daughters of music shall be brought low" may be the same as in the soliloquy of Jacques.

> and his big manly voice,
> Turning again toward childish treble pipes
> And whistles in his sound.

In the middle of life some people are "afraid of that which is high," and turn dizzy if they attempt to look over a parapet; as their joints stiffen they are more or less overcome by the "terrors in the way," in descending steep stairs or crossing streets crowded with traffic. The white blossoms of the almond tree may symbolize the white hairs of the aged. The reference of the silver cord may be to the spine, and the golden bowl to the head. Jastrow connects the "pitcher at the fountain" and the "wheel at the cistern" with either the kidneys or the intestines. Whatever may be the particular reference the general failing of the organs is contemplated. But even thus, this conclusion is a bit less doleful than Shakespeare's:

> Last scene of all,
> That ends this strange eventful history,
> Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
> Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.[9]

2. THE LITERATURE OF PESSIMISM

The Gilgamesh Epic, Barton, *Archæology and the Bible*, p. 412.
The *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam, Fitzgerald's translation.
TURGENEY, IVAN, *Virgin Soil.*
GALSWORTHY, JOHN, *To Let.*
HARDY, THOMAS, *Jude* and *The Dynasts.*
SWINBURNE, C. A., "The Triumph of Time," "Ilicet," "A Lamentation," "A Ballad of Burdens," "Dolores," "By the North Sea," "Garden of Proserpine."
ROSSETTI, DANTE GABRIEL, "Jenny," "The Sea Limits," "The Cloud Confines," "The House of Life," "The Card Dealer."
MORRIS, WILLIAM, The series, *The Earthly Paradise* and "The Watching of the Falcon."
THOMSON, JAMES, *City of Dreadful Night, To Our Ladies of Death, Doom of a City, A Lady of Sorrow,* and essay on "Sympathy."
LYTTON, E. R., (Owen Meredith), The series, *The Wanderer* and *Marah,* "Macromicos," "Midges," and "Prolog to the Wanderer."
SYMONDS, JOHN A., *The Last Doubt, Animi Figura, Vagabunduli.*

The closest parallel to Ecclesiastes in the literature of the ancient world is the Gilgamesh Epic, dated about 2,000 B.C. The wanderings of Gilgamesh represent the Odyssey of the sun through the heavens during the winter season, in search of that renewal of strength which comes with the spring. The epic pictures him coming to a maiden named Sabitu, dwelling at the seashore, and inquiring of her how he may recover the strength which he feels ebbing away:

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[9] *As You Like It,* Act II, scene 7.

Why, O Gish dost thou wander about?
The life that thou seekest thou wilt not find.
When the gods created men,
Death they ordained for men,
Life they kept in their hands.
Thou, O Gish, fill thy belly!
Day and night be joyful!
Daily be glad!
Day and night make merry!
Let thy garments be white!
Anoint thy head and purify thyself.
With the children at thy bedside,
Enjoy the wife of thy bosom![10]

Ecclesiastes and the book of Job have always been close companions of men who in their pensive and melancholy moods were sickened with satiety or depressed by the seeming futility and transitoriness of life. It is rather significant that they were so much quoted and discussed in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In a very interesting discussion Goodale traces the literature of this period, tinctured as it is so strongly with disillusion, melancholy, ennui, and even the darker aspects of pessimism.[11] He shows the influence exerted upon our English poets and novelists by two groups of writings, the one composed of Schopenhauer and Hartmann and the religious classics of India, the other of Ecclesiates, the Greek tragedies and the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam.

The *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam was introduced to the British public in 1859 in the translation of Fitzgerald. At first it did not attract much attention, but it has since become a force in English literature. In 1885 Tennyson lovingly dedicated his *Tiresias* to Fitzgerald, whose "golden Eastern lay" the Poet Laureate praised as done "divinely well." The quatrain form of the *Rubaiyat* became a model for poems of melancholy, and many of these lesser rubaiyats appeared in England in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Omar lived in Persia in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (died about 1122 A.D.). He was a classmate of Nizam ul Mulk, who was later Grand Vizier. To carry out a student pact the vizier gave Omar a pension at court, which enabled him to devote his time to science and become the Royal Astronomer of the Court of Merv. With seven others, Omar devised a new calendar for Persia, the one which introduced the Jalili era, beginning with the year 1079, "a computation of time," says Gibbon, "which surpasses the Julian and approaches the accuracy of the Gregorian style." He produced a famous monograph on square and cubic roots, ironed out some of the difficulties in Euclid's definitions, and published an algebra of his own. But his fame as a poet has almost eclipsed his renown as a scientist.

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[10] Morris Jastrow, *The Gentle Cynic,* p. 174; cf. Ecclesiastes 9:7-9.

[11] Ralph Hinsdale Goodale, *Pessimism in English Poetry and Fiction, 1847-1900.*

Khayyam signifies a tent-maker, and the following quatrain is a play on the author's name:

Khayyam, who stitched the tents of science,
Has fallen in grief's furnace and been suddenly burned;
The shears of fate have cut the tent-ropes of his life,
And the broker of hope has sold him for nothing.[12]

Senator Albert Beveridge said that Omar Khayyam gave forth the truest epitome of the philosophy of the Orient. According to Fitzgerald the burden of Omar is the futility and transitoriness of life, the ignorance and helplessness of man, and the injustice of divine fate. Pleasure palls, knowledge is fleeting, all things pass without meaning or result, and death is ever present. Note the strain of pantheism and the strong current of fatalism:

We are no other than a moving row
Of Magic Shadow shapes that come and go
Round with the Sun-illumined lantern held
In Midnight by the Master of the Show;

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[12] *The Rubaiyat,* Fitzgerald's translation, Introd., p. 44.

But helpless pieces of the Game He plays
Upon this chequer-board of Nights and Days;
Hither and thither moves, and checks and slays,
And one by one back in the closet lays.

. . . . . .

The Moving Finger writes; and having writ,
Moves on; nor all your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it.[13]

The futility and transitoriness of life have perhaps never been expressed in a more finished style than in the quatrain:

A Moment's Halt—a momentary taste
Of Being from the well amid the Waste—
And lo! the phantom Caravan has reached
The Nothing it set out from—Oh make haste![14]

Like Koheleth in his second chapter and Swinburne in his "A Ballad of Burdens," Omar gives up reason as a failure and turns elsewhere for a more congenial "Second Marriage":

Divorced old barren Reason from my Bed,
And took the daughter of the Vine to Spouse.[15]

It is now well understood that the *Rubaiyat* in English is almost an original poem by Fitzgerald. His use of his sources is nearly as free as Shakespeare's use of his borrowed plots. It is a piece of exquisite workmanship—"coral building in literature," Edmund Gosse characterized it—rare in its delicacy of phrase, the niceness of its diction, and the complete adequacy with which it reproduces the melancholy pessimism of the Persian quatrain.

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[13] The *Rubaiyat,* fifth edition, quatrains lxviii, lxix, lxxi.

[14] *Ibid.,* quatrain xlviii.

[15] *Ibid.,* quatrain lv. Mons Nicolas holds that Omar was a Sufi mystic and referred to the Deity under the symbol of wine. But Omar was too hardheaded to engage in the cloudy speculations of the Sufis. Fitzgerald does not admit that his own references in his translation use wine in a symbolic sense.

Ecclesiastes and the *Rubaiyat* were not, of course, the only contributing causes to the pessimism of English literature in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Goodale cites two others as of chief importance. The first was the advance of the new science and learning which undermined the belief in a personal and provident God and immortality, and seemed to reveal man to be an utterly inconsequential inhabitant of a mechanical universe. The second cause was the social discouragement of the century when it came to the conclusion that the high hopes of human freedom and betterment which the industrial revolution presaged were doomed to disappointment. Instead of being the harbinger of social justice it was creating social and industrial evils surpassing anything in previous history. These two major barometers of the age seemed to indicate that man was helpless in the toils of brutal forces engaged in titanic warfare, which were utterly careless of his interests.

Turgenev pilloried the cruel indifference of nature to the interests of man in his prose poem "Nature." He fancies himself visiting Nature in her laboratories to put the question to her whether she is "considering the future destinies of mankind" with a view to the discovery of how man can attain the utmost of perfection and bliss:

> The Woman slowly turned her dark, lowering eyes upon me. Her lips moved, and a stentorian voice, like unto the clanging of iron, rang out:
>
> "I am thinking of how I may impart more power to the muscles in the legs of a flea, so that it may more readily escape from its enemies. The equilibrium of attack and defense has been destroyed. It must be restored. . . . Those words [Good, Reason, Justice] are the words of men. . . . I know neither good nor evil. Reason is no law to me—and what is justice? I have given thee life. . . . I take it away and give it to others; whether worms or men it makes no difference to me.[16]

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[16] Ivan Turgenev, "Nature," in *Virgin Soil,* pp. 371-372, quoted from Goodale's thesis, to which the author is also indebted for many of the suggestions as to literature here given.

The social expectancy of the nineteenth century was subject to high and low tides. The early idealists pinned their hopes for the perfection of the race on freedom, universal suffrage and higher education, and improved scientific technique. Shelley's imagination pictured Prometheus unchained and Jupiter bending to the will of man, but history proved speculations on these ideals to be in vain. Humanity did not respond to reason and enlightenment, the great masses remained inert, and man continued to be the slave of his own stupidity. Politicians did not become statesmen nor capitalists altruists. The machine in industry did not liberate man but enslaved him. It herded men into slums, set them long hours of work in crowded and unhygienic factories, introduced child labor and led to the degradation of the workers. As a result skepticism became widespread on the whole subject of progress. George Eliot, writing in 1871, said: "Will became an ardent public man working well in those days (in the thirties) when reforms were begun with a young hopefulness of immediate good which has been much checked in our days."[17] It was these conditions which nurtured the "novel of misery" in the nineties. In some writers, as in the case of Job, this sense of social futility took the form of a revolt. Among these was Hardy, who represents a man as going to the "President of the Immortals" to seek redress for the wrongs of this planet. But more frequently the writers of the time speak in a vein of baffled passive cynicism or of weary futility.

One of the notes constantly reëchoed in Ecclesiastes is that of the flux of things and the transitoriness of life. The cycle of the hours of day and night, the recurring seasons, the variableness of the winds, the ebb and flow of the tides, the passing generations of men, bring to the Hebrew cynic a keen realization of the dominion everywhere of change and decay. As Owen Meredith puts it, man is

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[17] George Eliot, *Middlemarch,* p. 758.

"still from illusion to illusion tost." Swinburne's complaint is not that life has no value but that it lacks permanence, and therefore its values are not enduring:

> A little sorrow, a little pleasure,
> Fate meets us from the dusty measure
> That holds the fate of us all.[18]

> The loves and the hours of the life of man,
> They are swift and sad being born of the sea.
> Hours that regret and rejoice for a span,
> Born with a man's breath, mortal as he;
> Loves that are lost ere they come to birth,
> Weeds on the wave without fruit upon earth.[19]

At the end of it all comes the "poppied sleep."

The brevity of life and the futility to which it leads is pictured by Owen Meredith in "Midges," a delightfully ironical poem in which the span of human life from the standpoint of a realization of its ideals of freedom, devotion, love, fame, etc., is declared to be no more adequate than that of the little insect that flies into one's eyes, which runs its course in sixty minutes.

Instead of an attitude of resignation and melancholy other writers react more rebelliously to the aimlessness of existence and the futility of human endeavor. This signifies a deeper confusion of mind. Some of it is due to temperamental weaknesses, but much arises from social circumstances which seem from the start to doom individual effort to failure. Stephen Phillips argues that even Christ would have failed to release Prometheus; how little hope of accomplishment is left therefore to frailer men like ourselves.[20] This state of mind is especially conspicuous in William Morris. His *Life and Death of Jason* is permeated with this "irony of life, this image of the victory of decay, of vanity, broods over the whole book."[21] In his *Earthly Paradise* we learn of a group of adventurers who set out from Europe toward the west to find a land of youth and happiness. After a long series of hardships they think that at last they have found it, only to be worse disappointed than ever. So the sum of their achievement is the learning of the lesson that

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[18] Charles A. Swinburne, "Ilicet," *Poems,* Vol. I, p. 74.
[19] Charles A. Swinburne, "The Triumph of Time," *Poems,* Vol. I, p. 74.
[20] Stephen Phillips, *Christ in Hades.*

at the most
Life flitteth whether it be blessed or cursed.[22]

As an observer of the ups and downs of social experimentation during the nineteenth century Owen Meredith held that high human expectations serve merely to accentuate the chagrin which is the accompaniment of failure. Men search for truth and find doubt, for certainty and find confusion, for satisfaction but are discouraged. One discovers in Meredith something more turbid than romantic melancholy, a pessimism indicative of the fact that he has lost his sense of spiritual direction. Knowledge of life brings its possessor no rewards except pain, satiety, tedium, and spiritual disillusion. His series of poems called *Marah,* more especially the Prologue, is written in the spirit and even in the style of Ecclesiastes.

This withholding of satisfaction leads some men finally to cast scruple aside and to seek solace in previously forbidden fields. Koheleth claims that he has tried everything and so does Swinburne in "A Ballad of Burdens." The passion with which Swinburne turns to seek relief in the madness of the fleshly Venus after the ruin of his dreams of finding satisfaction in the heavenly Virgin is depicted in "Dolores." The "Garden of Proserpine" voices the revulsion experienced by him later against the flesh and its powers and "his longing to find a refuge from them in a haven of undisturbed rest."[23]

[21] Stopford A. Brooke, *Studies from Clough.* Quoted from Goodale.

[22] William Morris, Prologue, "The Wanderers," *Earthly Paradise,* 186.

[23] W. Mallock, *Memoirs,* p. 76. See Swinburne's *Poetical Works,* Vol. I, p. 169.

One of the characters in Galsworthy's novel *To Let*, a Belgian named Monsieur Profond, confesses to a philosophy almost exactly like that of Koheleth. After completely exhausting life, as he thinks, he has neither enthusiasm nor principles left; life retains no interest, occupation, or endeavor which has anything worth while for him. This same moral astigmatism and intellectual confusion is the desperate plight of many other writers. Chekhov's *Note-Book,* for instance, contains the following monologue:

> *Solomon* (alone).—Oh! how dark life is! No night when I was a child so terrified me by its darkness as does this invisible existence. Lord, to David my father Thou gavest only the gift of harmonizing words and sounds, to sing and praise Thee on strings, to lament sweetly, to make people weep or admire beauty; but why hast Thou given me a meditative, hungry, sleepless, mind? Like an insect born of the dust, I hide in darkness; and in fear and despair, all shaking and shivering, I see and hear in everything an invisible mystery. Why this morning? Why does the sun come out from behind the temple and gild the palm tree? Why this beauty of women? Where does the bird hurry? What is the meaning of its flight, if it and its young and the place to which it hastens will, like myself, turn to dust? It were better I had never been born or were a stone to which God had given neither eyes nor thoughts. In order to tire out my body by nightfall, all day yesterday, like a mere workman, I carried marble to the temple; but now the night has come and I cannot sleep. . . . I'll go and lie down. Phorsco told me that if one imagines a flock of sheep running and fixes one's attention upon it, the mind gets confused and falls asleep. I'll do it . . . (*Exit*) [24]

The most rankling form of pessimism comes from the contemplation of utter defeat and extinction. While Koheleth did not believe in a future life he did not blacken the character of the universe by positing within it a malignant principle of hate. Where some writers find this universe merely indifferent to man, others discern a "heart of hate" and a central principle of malice in it which, as Swinburne says, "makes a goblin of the sun." [25] In Dante Gabriel Rossetti's "The Sea Limits" man and the world are one:

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[24] Anton Chekhov, *Note-Book.* Quoted from Phelps, *Human Nature in the Bible*, p. 293.

The same desire and mystery,
The echo of the whole sea's speech,
 And all mankind is thus at heart
 Not anything but what thou art:
And Earth, Sea, Man, are all in each.[26]

But this makes man's condition the more diabolical if hate be at the heart of things:

What of the heart of hate
 That beats in thy breast, O Time?
Red strife from the furtherest prime,
 And anguish of fierce debate;
War that shatters her slain,
 And peace that grinds them as grain,
And eyes fixed ever in vain
On the pitiless eyes of fate.[27]

The baffling of fate is one of Meredith's favorite themes:

It is not the scene I am seeing,
 The lonely sky and the sea,
It is the pathos of Being
 That is making so dark in me
This silent and solemn hour:—
 The bale of baffled power,
 The wail of unbaffled desire.[28]

The pessimism of the second James Thomson was so all-engulfing as to justify its discussion separately. His melancholia and despondency became so acute as to be uncontrollable. He had a profound religious struggle and was deeply impressed by the denunciations of the Old Testament prophets. The pendulum of his moods swung far and wide between opposite extremes. At times his temper was one of revolt and despair; at others of resignation and self-pity, with occasional gleams of hope in moments of remorseful searchings of self. These confused inner states are exhibited in his essay on "Sympathy," in which he credits God with "making each of us a bundle of antinomies miraculously coherent," and then has nothing better to say of human lot than that the "life course is but a series of stepping-stones, fragmentary piers and broken arches, projecting from the midst of a shoreless flood ever dark and unfathomed about our feet." Many other of his poems also stress the insignificance of man. On the other hand one of the characters in *A Lady of Sorrow*, the shadow, tells him that he should really live "ever conscious of your insignificance as an isolated creature, but no less conscious of your lofty and even divine significance as one flame of the universal fire, one note in the infinite harmony; without arrogance, selfishness, delusion, disdain; without hope or fear, or self-contradictory longing, yet burning with pure aspiration." [29] Again, he can paint the following forbidding picture of what follows after death:

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[25] Dante G. Rossetti, "Jenny," *Poems,* p. 62.

[26] Dante G. Rossetti, "The Sea Limits," *Poems,* p. 254.

[27] Dante G. Rossetti, "The Cloud Confines," *Poems,* p. 229.

[28] Owen Meredith, "Macromicos," *Poems,* p. 229.

> One part of me shall feed a little worm,
> And it a bird on which a man shall feed;
> One lime the mould; one nourish insect sperm;
> One thrill sweet grass, one pulse in bitter weed;
> This swell a fruit and that evolve in air;
> Another trickle to a springle's lair,
> Another paint a daisy in the mead.[30]

We have not space to consider the pessimistic literature of India, but devotees of Ecclesiastes are apt to feel a deep sense of disillusion similar to that expressed in the Hindu doctrine of Maya. In John Addington Symond's last poem, "The Last Doubt," from which we take the final quotation of the chapter, the influence of Western science and the Oriental philosophy of pessimism converge:

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[29] Quoted from Goodale, *Pessimism in English Poetry and Fiction, 1847-1900.*

[30] James Thomson, *Selected Poems,* p. 100.

> Lost in life's gloom, Maya descends on me:—
> What are these limbs? This hand, these words I write?
> What are my deeds, thoughts, instincts? What is sight,
> Speech, hearing, action, self? . . . Oh misery!
> Beyond man's power to feel, know, act, dream, be,
> There dwells a something, a dread, infinite Might,
> Essential evanescence, endless night,
> Dumb ground of all things, sole reality.
> From this . . . this unapproachable, unknown,
> Intangible, unthinkable, . . . this thing
> Deep as the world's base, . . . this brute ocean ring
> Girdling life's sentient sphere, bathing the zone
> Of Being, . . . from this force, this frozen sting,
> Reason, torpedo-struck shrinks on her throne.[31]

Discussion Topics and Exercises

1. Compare Koheleth and the *Rubaiyat* on these points: faith in God, fatalism, and view of the world.
2. Compare both with the Epicurean philosophy.
3. What help does science offer toward the solution of the problem of evil? Has science made men more or less pessimistic?
4. Are melancholy and pessimism more prevalent in advanced than in primitive cultures and civilizations?
5. What are the sources of pessimism to-day? Are young people more pessimistic than older people? What part does religious faith or the lack of it play in producing pessimism?
6. Goethe called Christianity the "religion of sorrow." Is that true? In what respects is Christianity pessimistic? Optimistic?
7. Compare the views and attitudes to life of Koheleth and Job.
8. Make an intensive study of at least two of the above writers as to attitude, points of view, and solutions of life's enigma.

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[31] John Addington Symonds, "The Last Doubt," quoted from Goodale, *op. cit.*

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CHAPTER XV

THE BOOK OF JOB

1. THE BIBLICAL EPIC

THE book of Job is without doubt the profoundest book of the Bible and must be included in any adequate list of the world's classics. It is the peer of the greatest Greek tragedies, of the vision of Dante, and of the epic of man's inner life in *Faust*. It is entitled to this ranking because of its elevated lyric style, its exquisite similes, its sustained dignity and beauty, and because of the resoluteness with which it grapples with the most baffling problems of life. It presupposes a long period of culture and is itself the finest flowering of the more mature thought of Israel. Hebrew wisdom here approaches most nearly in matter and method to the interests and processes characteristic of the philosophic mind of Greece. It reflects the mental upheaval experienced by the devout Jew who was honest enough to admit that prosperity and long life are not always the lot of the righteous. Its every word has been "fiercely furnaced in the blast of a soul that had struggled in earnest," for it is the spiritual history of one who kept his intellectual integrity unimpaired on the way up from the deepest despair and suffering to peace. It was written in the third or fourth century B.C.

Like most wisdom writings Job is lacking in literary unity. It contains two separate literary units, two views of life and religion, in fact there are two distinct books of Job. The one consists of the prose story prologue, chapters 1 and 2, and the epilogue, 42:7-17. This is an old popular folk-tale which pictures a Job who is a wealthy sheik and accepts the conventional ideas of religion. He has seven sons and three daughters, seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred she-asses. His abounding prosperity is based upon equally exceptional piety of the accepted type expressed after the usual Semitic fashion in repeated prayers and lavish sacrifices. The setting is the story of a bargain in heaven made between a primitively conceived God and a Satan, who is the over-zealous and cynical news-gatherer and scandal-monger of the celestial company. As a result of the bargain Job's faithfulness to this God is put to a cold-blooded and arbitrary test, from which in the end it emerges triumphant. His reward, moreover, is not bestowed upon him in terms of the inner life, of spiritual energy and mental peace, but takes the form of seven new sons and three new daughters and twice his former material wealth. Obviously this story does not come to grips with real life nor does it show any sound appreciation of moral cause and effect. It is as melodramatic and unreal as some modern movies and the God it portrays is as whimsical as the most fickle deity that ever reigned on Olympus.

The real book of Job which challenges the attention of thinkers begins with chapter three and ends with 42:6.[1] This is a lyric poem in dramatic form, beginning with a cycle of speeches by Job and his three friends, thrice repeated, followed by the response of God in the storm, and the final pronouncement of Job. Its symmetry is not really broken up by the speech of Elihu (chapters 32-37), for that is undoubtedly a later insertion which adds nothing to the theme. We shall drop it out in our study in order to make the dramatic structure of the poem more evident.

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[1] Two theories have been advanced as to the relation of the two parts of Job: first, that the poem and the story were separately produced and put together later by an editor; second, that the writer used the folk-story as the setting for the poem and then appended the original epilogue.

ANALYSIS OF THE POEM

Dramatis Personæ

Job, the sufferer.
Eliphaz, an elderly and devout friend who delights in "Wisdom."
Bildad, a less sympathetic friend, who is philosophical but narrowly dogmatic.
Zophar, a younger friend who is more literal, hot-headed and dogmatic.

Scene

Job seated on the community ash-heap outside the city wall.

The Argument

Chap. 3. Job meditates on the great problem of evil in human history.
(The three friends draw closer and essay to speak.)

The First Cycle—chapters 4-14

Chaps. 4-5. Eliphaz gives a fatherly reproof. Theme: God punishes the wicked.
6-7. Job wishes for relief. His friends only add to his misery. He does not accept their version of his predicament.
8. Bildad: God's favor is in exact proportion to man's piety.
9-10. "Job's everlasting No"; man cannot please God; God does not understand man.
11. Zophar indulges in pious platitudes.
12-14. Job censures his friends and avers his faith in God; brevity of life.

The Second Cycle—chapters 15-21

15. Eliphaz insinuates that Job is guilty of sin and that his refusal to admit it is a case of blasphemy.
16-17. Job reproves his friends. He is working his way to a clearer solution almost as if unconscious of their presence.
18. Bildad reproves Job and recounts the calamities of the wicked for his benefit.
19. Job rises to a stronger note of faith in God. Verse 28 is the high-water mark, "I know that my Vindicator lives."

20. Zophar resents Job's insinuation that he too may be a sinner.
21. Job: The self-evident prosperity of the wicked breaks down their theory.

The Third Cycle—chapters 22-28

22. Eliphaz draws up a series of severe accusations against Job; urges repentance.
23-24. Job acknowledges there are such sinners as Eliphaz depicts.
25; 26:5-14. Bildad takes up the argument from nature.
26:2-4; 27:2-7. Job refuses to appear to be what he is not.
27:8-23. Zophar continues the argument from nature.
28. Zophar holds that wisdom is the most precious of all things.
29-30. Job's soliloquy.
31. Job's final vindication.
38:1-40:14. God's voice in the storm.
42:2-5. Job's confession of God.[2]

To repeat, the Job of the lyric poem is not the Job of the folk-story. Instead of a conventional Arabian pastoral sheik the Job of the poem is a social-minded man conversant with city problems. He is the very antithesis of orthodoxy or conventionality. The poet himself was evidently democratic in his thinking, humanitarian in his outlook, cosmopolitan in his tastes, philosophic in temperament and an empiricist in religion. He had been deeply impressed by the changing phases of the seasons, was familiar with the habits of birds and animals, and a student of the stars. He appears to have traveled rather widely and his knowledge of the Nile seems to be based on personal observation.

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[2] Part of the final speeches of Bildad (26:5-14), and Zophar (27:7-23), are wrongly attributed to Job. Most scholars regard chap. 28 as a later poem in honor of Wisdom. Job 30:12-15, 18-28; 31:9-15, 26-28, 30 may be interpolations. The Voice from the Storm should follow Job's challenge, omitting the speeches of Elihu (chaps. 32-37). The description of the ostrich in 39:13-18, and that of the hippopotamus and the crocodile in 40:15-41:43, are late insertions.

A few scholars have insisted that the book of Job is an imitation of a Greek tragedy.[3] But any attempt to discover the technique of the Greek drama and to locate appropriate places for the appearances of the chorus in this book is doomed to failure. There is no action, no plot movement, and no dramatic development; moreover its happy ending removes it far from the Greek tragedies. Davidson says that "any idea of presenting the work on the stage never entered the author's mind." Stuart Walker's attempt to dramatize it is a dramatic rendering rather than a true play. However, the poet seems to have been familiar with Greek literature and there are affinities between his poem and true drama.

A striking parallel to the book of Job was found in the ancient cuneiform library of Ashurbanipal written on a series of tablets entitled, *I Will Praise the Word of Wisdom*. The use of the name of Bel instead of Marduk, who became the chief god of Babylon about 2,000 B.C., seems to indicate that back of this work is a far older story. The hero (corresponding to Job) is named Tabi-utul-Bel, King of Nippur. The first tablet describes the varied afflictions that overtook him. Tabi-utul-Bel is speaking:

> A king—I have been changed into a slave.
> A madman—my companions became estranged from me.
> In the midst of the assembly they spurned me.
> At the mention of my piety—terror.
> By day—deep sighs; at night—weeping.
> The month—cries; the year—distress.

The second tablet continues in the same vein:

> I cried to the god but he did not show his countenance;
> I prayed to the goddess but she did not raise my head.

The king's protestations of innocence remind one of those of Job:

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[3] Especially Horace Kallen, *The Book of Job as a Greek Tragedy.*

> As though I had not always set aside the portion for the god,
> And had not invoked the goddess at the meal,
> Had not bowed my face and brought my tribute;
>
> . . . .
>
> Prayer was my practice; sacrificing, my law.

The most majestic passage follows. It recalls the ninetieth psalm as well as the book of Job:

> Who is there that can grasp the will of the gods in heaven? The plan of God is full of mystery; who can understand it? How can mortals learn the way of God?
>
> He who is still alive at evening is dead the next morning. In an instant he is cast into grief, of a sudden he is crushed.
>
> For a moment he sings and plays,
> In a twinkling he wails like a mourner.[4]

The poem closes with a hymn of thanksgiving. But where Job triumphs through a vision of God, Tabi-utul-Bel, it is recorded, obtained relief through a magician who drove away the evil spirits which were the cause of his distress. The question of integrity or of moral responsibility is not raised.

What then, in contrast, is the problem of Job? The current creed of the Jews asserted that God's dividends of prosperity, long life, and joy to men were in proportion to their righteousness and his awards of punishment in exact ratio to their wickedness. Piety brought good health while pain and suffering were the evidences of sin. The chief weakness of the current orthodoxy was this profit and loss motive. Satan, that cautious and seasoned Inspector for the Almighty, put his finger on the weak spot of contemporary ethics when he asked, "Doth Job serve God for naught?" Would Job remain so devoted to God if his devotions were not rewarded so handsomely;

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[4] Translation by Kent, *Student's Old Testament,* "Proverbs and Didactic Poems," p. 34. See also Barton, *Archæology and the Bible,* Part II, Chap. 20.

what would happen if he were to get no pay at all? "Can God trust men?" is the first question raised.

The other side of the same question is the one with which the poem is primarily concerned, "Can men trust God?" The heart of the enigma is not the problem which suffering raises by its mere existence, but rather the stain which its infliction is claimed to put upon integrity of soul. Is sin the fountainhead of all suffering? Can a man who is suffering dreadful misery still affirm his integrity before God? There is a spirit in which mankind finds itself able to bear even the pain that Job bore if it is at peace with its own soul. Take this away, however, and its powers of resistance break down.

While his friends are waiting in awkward silence Job in anguish cries out:

Let the day perish wherein I was born,
And the night which said, there is a man child conceived.[5]

Although Job's friends hold the orthodox view that all suffering is a by-product of sin, his high reputation for goodness leads them at first to cast about for some other explanation of his grievous state. So they point out to him that it may be intended by God as a salutary discipline:

Is not the fear (of God) thy confidence,
    the integrity of thy ways thy hope?
Remember, I pray thee, who (ever) perished, being innocent?
    or where were the upright cut off?
According as I have seen, they that plough iniquity,
    and sow mischief, reap the same.
By the breath of God they perish,
    and by the blast of His anger are they consumed. (4:6-9.)[6]

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[5] Compare the *Œdipus Coloneus* of Sophocles.

Happiest beyond compare
Never to taste of life;
Happiest in order next,
Being born with quickest speed
Thither again we turn
From whence we came.

[6] Translation from J. A. Bewer, *The Literature of the Old Testament*, Chap. 19.

When this theory collapses under the pressure of Job's insistence upon his own innocence they come to the conclusion that appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, Job is guilty, and only in repentance can he find a renewal of God's grace. Once let him acknowledge his guilt and he will be saved:

If thou purge thy heart,
    and stretch out thy hands towards Him;
If thou put the iniquity which is in thy hand far away,
    and let not unrighteousness dwell in thy tents;
Surely then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot,
    yea, thou shalt be stedfast and not fear.
For then shalt thou remember thy misery,
    thou shalt remember it as by-gone days. (11:13-16.)

The friends have now presented their theory of the disciplinary and corrective character of suffering fully. But when they continue to go around endlessly in this same circle Job grows impatient with them. He is sensible with Euripides that "'Tis easier to advise, than suffering to endure," and replies:

I also could speak as you do;
If your soul were in my soul's stead,
I could join words together against you,
And shake mine head at you. (16:4-5, A.V.)

Job's real struggle, however, is with himself, for he had complacently believed for years that the balancing of piety and prosperity was always just. But now that he is suffering disproportionately he will not allow even long-prized convictions to distort fact and so he absolutely denies the truth of that principle. He does not assert that he is sinless—no man is—but he asks how long God will keep probing for a vulnerable spot in the frail man He created in order that He may find an opportunity to punish him:

If I have sinned, what can I do
    to Thee, O Thou watcher of men?

Why hast thou set me as a mark for Thee,
so that I am a burden to Thee?
And why dost Thou not pardon my transgression
and take away my guilt? (7:20-22.)

Job shows due submission to the power and omniscience of God but he dares to demand that even He shall not overstep the bounds of the moral. He believes that if his predicament could be presented rightly to God that he would win his case, for he refuses to believe that God ultimately can be unjust. So he cries out for a mediator between man and his Maker:

For He is not a man like myself whom I could answer,
That we could come together in the court.
O that there were an umpire between us,
That he might lay his hand upon both of us. (9:32-33.) [7]

His thought now turns to contrast his treatment in the past at the hands of God, which had been full of justice and love, with His present mysterious hostility and persecution. This gives rise to a strange conflict in his soul. Job's recoil is so sharp that he refuses to interpret his present experiences in the light of his former idea of God's benevolence, and instead decides to let his present experiences revise his thought of God. He now comes to the conclusion that God had a sinister purpose in taking such pains to fashion and be kind to him. He would thus be able to strike the more deadly blow when Job has been lulled into a sense of security. This is perhaps the bitterest thought which the suffering man can entertain:

Thou hast granted me life and lovingkindness,
and Thy care has preserved my spirit,
Yet these things Thou didst hide in Thy heart,
I know that this was in Thy mind:
If I sin Thou wouldst mark me
and not acquit me from mine iniquity.
If I were wicked, woe unto me,
If I were righteous, yet should I not lift up my head.
(10:12-15, Bewer's translation.)

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[7] Translation from *The Old Testament: An American Translation*, edited by J. M. P. Smith.

At times he has misgivings that he may be unjust to God; then again he is overwhelmed by a pronounced sense of the unfairness of it all. A God of love and justice is set over against a hard and unforgiving God and He must choose between them. And so, finally, Job comes to his own momentous independent decision. Come what may he will not put away his integrity; in fact, God will finally vindicate it. Having long ago ceased to hope for any help from his friends his extremity drives him back upon God Himself. He will cling to his old God of love and justice and defy contradiction to do its worst. Sitting there on the community ash-heap, out of his utter physical misery and intellectual chaos he utters the Everlasting No of an honest human soul. So exalting is his high act of faith that it rises to the sublime climax of his argument in 19:25-26:[8]

I know that my vindicator lives,
  and at last He will stand upon the dust:
And after my skin is thus destroyed,
  then without my flesh shall I see God.

Wistfully he cries out:

O that I knew where I might find Him!
  that I might come even to His seat!
I would set my cause in order before Him,
  and fill my mouth with arguments.
I would know the words with which He would answer me,
  and understand what He would say to me.
Would He contend with me in the greatness of His power?
  if only He would give heed to me,
He would establish justice and would reason with me,
  so that I should be delivered forever from judgment.
(23:3-7.)

In a final soliloquy, which is one of the finest passages of all literature, Job reaffirms his innocence:

I put on righteousness and it clothed itself with me!
I was eyes to the blind, feet to the lame,
And a father to the needy,

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[8] Translation from J. A. Bewer, *op. cit.*, p. 325. On critical questions see J. M. P. Smith, *Moral Life of the Hebrews*, pp. 273 f.

I delivered the poor when he cried,
The orphan and him that had no helper;
And the cause that I knew not I searched out.
If I have walked in vanity
Or my foot has hasted to deceit;
If any spot has cleaved to my hands;
If I despised the cause of my man-servant
Or my maid-servant when they contended with me;
If I rejoiced because my wealth was great,
Or if my heart has been enticed by a woman;
Or if I have withheld the poor from their desire
Or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail,
Then let my shoulder fall from my shoulder-blade
And mine arm be broken from the bone!
Let me be weighed by an even balance
That God may know mine integrity.[9]

Job also repeats his challenge:

O that I had one to hear me!
Lo, here is my signature, let the Almighty answer me!
And that I had the indictment which mine adversary has written!
Surely I would carry it upon my shoulder,
I would bind it unto me as a crown:
I would declare unto Him the number of my steps,
    as a Prince would I go near unto Him.
(31:35-37, Bewer's translation.)

This is the intrepid stand of a titanic soul. Stopping not to listen to the words of Elihu let us rather give heed to Yahweh's answer from the storm:

Who is this that darkens counsel
    by words without knowledge?
Gird up now thy loins like a man,
    for I will demand of thee and declare thou unto Me.
Where was thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?
    Declare, if thou hast understanding!
(38:2-4, Bewer's translation.)

This speech of Yahweh from the cloud is beyond praise. Job is carried back and down the corridors of time and on and on through space. He is taught a new sense of the place of his own little self by these glimpses of an infinitely varied and beautiful universe. Hitherto he had shut himself up within the four walls of his own mind and paid no attention to the scope and meaning of the whole, of which he was so tiny a part. How insignificant in such a vast and complicated network of mysteries now seems the single addition contributed by the mystery of his own personal suffering. It became clear at last to him that the God who was competent enough to keep the whole universe in good running order could be trusted to do justice to his case. He had been thinking hitherto that God was inaccessible but now his eyes have been opened to see that He is everywhere and that his providence is all-inclusive.

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[9] Quoted from Charles R. Brown, *The Strange Ways of God,* pp. 7 f.

His experience with the voice out of the storm did two things for Job. In the first place it made him more humble and less discontented. It did not solve his problem nor did his understanding give up seeking a solution in its own terms, but Job began to approach the problem in a different spirit. His look at the universe had set his personal problem into a truer perspective and awakened him to a wiser devoutness. For, in the second place, it had given him a new vision of God:

> I had heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear;
> But now mine eye seeth Thee.

He can now part with the old bookkeeping system of rewards and punishments, and the false connections between suffering and sin sanctioned by them, because new moral values have taken their places. Second-hand acquaintance with God through the "hearing of the ear" has been replaced by the knowledge of God obtainable through "the seeing of the eye." God could not be permanently satisfied with anything less than this complete understanding, nor could man, after he had attained such a faith, be satisfied with anything less than its vindication of God.

2. The Literature of Revolt

Æschylus, *Prometheus Bound.*
Goethe, Johann W., *Faust.*
Wells, H. G., *The Undying Fire.*
Andreyev, Leonid, *Anathema;* a drama.
Byron, Lord, *Cain;* a dramatic poem.
White, William Hale, *The Deliverance of Mark Ruthera*
Twain, Mark, *The Mysterious Stranger.*

Job, *Prometheus Bound, and Faust*—three representatives of three different ages and civilizations—are al three distinctive versions of the titanic struggle which th spirit of man wages against his spiritual and intellectua limitations. The revolt of Job occurred at the mos crucial point in the development of Hebrew thought. Th theme of the Promethean myth is man's overcoming o the obstacles by which the jealousy of Zeus sought t block the path of Greek advancement in the arts and philosophy, while Faust is a distillation of the subtlest essenc of our modern temper, longing passionately and strivin with almost superhuman energy to overleap the bounds se to human knowledge. The problems with which thes great poems deal are anvils on which many an intellectua hammer has been broken. Wells, in his novel, *Th Undying Fire,* makes Job Huss a twin brother of th Hebrew Job and lets him discuss the problem of evil i the light of its devastating work during the recent Worl War. Andreyev's *Anathema* is a new and interestin analysis of the cynical spirit and love's conquering power Mark Twain, through the pranks which he makes Sata play upon the little children in *The Mysterious Stranger* vividly restates the whole problem of evil. White' *Deliverance of Mark Rutherford* is almost a runnin commentary on Job, and Byron's poem is a series of variations on the Satanic theme in the old story of Cain an his family. An inductive study of this literature will yiel ariety of suggestions bearing on the interpretation of central problem of Job.

Schlegel has said of *Prometheus Bound,* "It is not a gle tragedy but tragedy itself." According to the myth, ometheus had not only stolen fire from heaven in a nel tube, but he had taught men to procure metals from earth and make them into tools to build ships and ellings. He had invented numbers, the calendar, and measurement of time—in fact, had given men their rt in all the arts and sciences. He had done this in open iance of the cruel decision by Zeus to destroy the exist- race of men and create a new one.[10] His unselfish otion to the cause of humanity drew upon Prometheus anger of Zeus, by whose order he was chained to a g on the Caucasus mountains, where for ages a vulture yed upon his liver. His intolerable suffering is the me of the Æschylean drama, agony so extreme and nerited that many Christian poets have not hesitated to ociate it with Christ's own.[11]

Oceanus and his daughters, the nymphs of the Chorus,[12] t Prometheus, but unlike the friends of Job they side h the sufferer and think he is in the right and Zeus in wrong. They are fearful, however, of the after con- uences to Prometheus. Mercury, the third visitor, is rely a lackey of Zeus and has nothing to offer but pious titudes of submission. The only mortal in the play is

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According to Greek mythology, Kronos, the ruler of heaven and h, was overthrown by his sons, Zeus, Neptune, and Pluto. Zeus me the supreme God of Olympus and married his sister Hera and the dominion of the sea to Neptune and of the underworld to Pluto. netheus, son of one of the Titans, opposed this upstart ruler and took side of the race of men which Zeus intended to destroy.

See especially Byron's and Longfellow's *Prometheus;* also poems on netheus by Lowell and H. Coleridge. In Stephen Phillips' *Christ in es,* Christ and Prometheus meet sympathetically.

Inachus, the father of Io, is the son of Oceanus and brother to the ien of the Chorus, which chorus has a more definite function in this than is usual in the Greek tragedies but is of the same general ire.

Io, the daughter of Inachus, a beautiful maiden whom Zeus loved and changed into a heifer when he was caught by his consort, Hera. Madly jealous she took a fearful vengeance of her own upon the hapless Io by setting a gadfly the task of stinging her constantly and giving her no peace. The spectacle of this unfortunate girl, duped by Zeus and persecuted by Hera, serves as an example of the injustice of the gods to mortals, with whose sufferings it identifies those of Prometheus. In the play Prometheus hints at, but does not definitely divulge, his secret that a descendant of Io, the mighty Hercules, will finally release him. Prometheus remains bound in misery during Zeus' reign, but he never succumbs in spirit. In *Prometheus Unbound* Shelley pictures the conquering reach of the spirit of man expressed in the advances of science.

Goethe took the Faust legend, which had been frequently presented as a puppet play in the German fairs, and turned it into a vehicle for giving crowning expression to the intellectual yearning characteristic of the period of Romanticism, in which he shared so deeply. The folk-plays simply showed Faust selling his soul for pleasure in the famous contract which he makes with Satan. Goethe, taking a leaf from the book of Job, inserted a prologue in which the Lord and Mephistopheles gamble for the soul of Faust. To win the wager Mephistopheles must so fully stupefy Faust with sensual pleasure that he will no longer care to strive for beauty and truth. Mephistopheles embodies the modern conception of the spirit of evil, the spirit of denial, of cynicism, of disillusionment, and of scorn for those who continue to strive for ideal ends. He is no longer a devil with hoofs and horns but a modern gentleman with evening dress, the intellectual peer of Faust. Faust is the impetuous student, all eagerness to pierce at once to the inner secret and meaning of things. In contrast, Wagner is the painstaking student, the experimenter, who by the slow method of the laboratory expects to discover the bits of truth which shall finally together make the significant whole.

In the first part Faust devotes himself to sensual pleasures which culminate in his love affair with Margaret. The act closes with his sin against the innocent girl, his slaying of her brother, her repentance at the altar, and the flight of Faust. Ordinarily the acted play ends here, but for our purpose the second part is the more important. Time has healed the wounds inflicted in the first act and instead of spending his days in futile remorse Faust is seeking to redeem himself by voluntary bondage to the ideal of beauty. Now more and more Faust takes the lead and it is Mephistopheles who follows. The Spirit of Denial admits that he does not feel at home in Greece, where Faust goes to seek Helen of Troy. Helen, who symbolizes the Greek spirit of classical beauty, is persuaded to make a visit to northern lands, symbolizing the spread of Greek learning through Europe in the Renaissance. Her marriage with Faust, who is an embodiment of the Gothic yearning for truth, accomplishes the union of Classicism and Romanticism, and their son Euphorion represents the poetic fruitage of this union, of which type Byron is the most fitting modern example. In the end Helen vanishes, leaving only her garments behind, in token of the passing of all earthly beauty.

Thereafter Faust devotes himself to practical interests, such as the conquest of the forces of nature, the improvement of man's physical lot, and the promotion of affairs of state. He becomes the very incarnation of the spirit of material and social progress. By his unremitting search for satisfaction, first in beauty and then in unselfish devotion to progress, Faust purges himself of the sin of his early life and satisfaction falls to his lot in his old age. Mephistopheles claims that he has won the wager simply because Faust achieved satisfaction, but the Lord overrules him and has Faust transported to heaven, there to live in company with the saints. His satisfaction is not due to sensual indulgence, as Mephistopheles had wagered it would be, but to his solid intellectual and social achievements. Faust repeats Goethe's own life and that life is the answer which the courageous Gothic spirit made to the faltering fears of medievalism. Like the book of Job the drama ends with a vision of God and the attainment of inner peace as the goal of undiscouraged striving.

This same spirit of revolt and struggle reappears in Wagner's treatment of the *Niebelungen Ring* stories, which originally were attempts to explain the origin of things, the forces of nature, and the inevitable fate that hangs over all. Wotan, the greatest of the gods, an embodiment of the World Will in the Schopenhaurian sense, longs for an ideal Man to extricate the gods from the network of law and fate in which they have become involved. This can be done only by the discovery of new truth, a task which only the ideal man can achieve. Fricka, the wife of Wotan, who stands for the maintenance of the old order, exercises more control over Wotan than Fate does over Zeus. Their daughter, Brunhilde, responds to the voice of human love and defies the gods of fate by leaving the joys of Walhalla to become the wife of Siegfried. Prometheus-like, she joins hands with men, preferring their struggle to the idle futilities of the gods. Thus she becomes mother to the new race which is to usher in the new order of truth. Wagner says that Wotan is "the sum of the intellect of the present, whilst Siegfried is the man of the Future, the man we wish, the man we will but cannot make, and the man who must create himself through our annihilation."[13] The *Twilight of the Gods* is witness that the old order is declining. Its dwarfs are instinctively lustful and greedy; its giants, patient, drudging menials; and its gods, clever, intellectual tyrants. They are all passing and the new day of man, of freedom, is arriving. Wagner was attempting nothing less stupendous than to "show Nature in her naked truth, with all her innate opposites, whose infinitely varied meetings include the shock of mutual repulsion. . . . The whole course of the poem shows the necessity of recognizing the change, the diversity, the multiplicity, the eternal newness of reality and life, and yielding place to it."[18]

The "Stranger" in Mark Twain's story is Satan, but in society he goes under the name of Philip Traum. He laughs at the follies of men and mocks their devotion to God. All their moral sense is good for, he says, is to get them into trouble. As occurs elsewhere in the literature of Satanism, Traum charges God with being responsible for this miserable and yet inescapable order of things. As in Wells' *Undying Fire,* here, too, Satan cannot originate anything himself, but he can impart to already created things such a slant as to change final results. To amuse the children Traum produces petty beings and then aimlessly destroys them. In the affairs of men he is able to tip the scales and effect results slightly for what he chooses to call the better. All his acts are object lessons in accord with his picture of life in our world as "only a vision, a dream." The conclusion of the story epitomizes the whole literature of revolt. Traum is speaking:

> Strange indeed that you should not have expected that your universe and its contents were only dreams, visions, fiction! Strange because they are so frankly and hysterically insane, like all dreams: a God who could make good children as easily as bad, yet preferred to make bad ones; who could have made every one of them happy, yet never made a single happy one; who made them prize their bitter life yet stingily cut it short; who gave his angels eternal happiness unearned, yet required his other children to earn it; who gave his angels painless lives, yet cursed his other children with biting miseries and maladies of mind and body; who mouths justice and invented hell—mouths mercy and invented hell—mouths Golden Rules and forgiveness multiplied by seventy times seven, and invented hell; who mouths morals for other people and has

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[18] Richard Wagner, *Letter to August Roeckel,* 1854.

> none Himself; who frowns upon crimes and commits them all; who created man without invitation and then tries to shuffle the responsibility for man's acts upon man instead of honorably placing it where it belongs upon Himself; and finally with altogether divine obtuseness invites this poor absurd slave to worship Him.
>
> You perceive now that all these things are impossible except in a dream. You perceive that they are pure and puerile insanities, the silly creations of the imagination that is not conscious of its freaks—in a word that they are a dream and you are the maker of it. . . .
>
> It is true what I have revealed to you: there is no God, no universe, no human race, no earthly life, no heaven, no hell. It is all a dream, a grotesque and foolish dream. Nothing exists but you.[14]

In Byron's bitter poem, *Cain,* Lucifer instructs the hero by taking him out into lone stellar space as an observation post from which he can see for himself that the responsibility for this evil world rests upon God. Of course it had better not been created at all. The general attitude and tone may be gathered from the following:

> let Him
> Sit on His vast and solitary throne,
> Creating worlds to make eternity less burthensome
> Less burthensome to His immense existence. . . .
>
> He is alone,
> Indefinite, indissoluble tyrant;
> Could He but crush Himself, 'twere the best boon
> He ever granted; but let Him reign on,
> And multiply Himself in misery.

In *Anathema* the search and longing of man is not primarily for knowledge but for immortality. The Spirit of Denial demands a look beyond the Gates barring the way into the Eternal. He is granted one glimpse but it avails him nothing and hence his spirit of denial acquires new insistence. David, the principal character of the play, comes into the possession of great wealth and at once begins to give it liberally to the poor. They come to think of him as able to perform miracles, and when he fails to live up to these expectations they stone him. The Spirit of Denial takes it for granted that this means the end of David, his utter collapse and final ruination. David, however, has attained, if not immortality, a deathless triumph through the power of love. Here, as in Job, the solution of the problem is the finding of a passage from internal stress and strain to permanent inner peace.

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[14] Mark Twain's story is based on Voltaire's *Hermit,* which is one of the best examples of the literature of Satanism.

The Undying Fire represents Satan and God as playing a game of checkers. Satan cannot supersede God, but he can interfere with His plans sufficiently to delay or partly to spoil their execution. He boasts that he can turn this world into an uncertain experiment. He maintains that he really won the old wager over Job of the land of Uz and offers to wager again that the spirit of man will break again if put to an equivalent test in such a world as ours. Thereupon God bids him proceed to determine whether man is something "more than a stir amidst the slime, a fuss in the mud that signifies nothing." So Job Huss on a bed of pain learns that his son has been killed in Germany. A committee calls to say that he is no longer president of the institution of learning, to which he has given his life. In the course of the conversation with this notifying committee free scope is given to a discussion of the problem of evil. The general point of view taken is the evolutionary one and almost every major phase of pessimistic thought in England during the nineteenth century is covered. The discussion turns on the basis of courage; "so long as your courage endures you will conquer. . . ."

3. God and Man

Job and Prometheus offer an opportunity for interesting comparisons between Hebrew and Greek culture. Job is Semitic and Oriental both in outlook and phrasing, whereas Prometheus is Aryan and Western. Job's central interest is religious. He is concerned over the preservation of his moral integrity and the right of his mind to pass judgment upon the treatment meted out to him; the Promethean myth champions the right of man to invade the universe through the arts and sciences, to the end that he may control it for his own advancement. The two works present strikingly different views of God. Yahweh is the eternal creator and sustainer; Zeus is a recent upstart, whose throne is even then in jeopardy. Both dramas subscribe to the belief in the ultimate justice of things; in Job the appeal is from appearances to a reality which contradicts them; in Prometheus from Zeus to a source of justice foreign to his practice. Job's appeal is from God, as appearances make Him out to be to God as He is in reality.

In Job the problem is personal and individual, but in the Greek myth the evil intent of Zeus embraces all men. In the Greek drama it is the forces of nature against which man must contend. Without the aid of fire he cannot conquer these forces and adapt nature to his uses. In the Hebrew story the conflict is over a false conception of moral rewards and a wrong view of God. Both alike insist upon the right of free thought and speech, but while Job remains reverent and devout Prometheus is openly defiant. The temper of Prometheus is more akin to that of Socrates, Voltaire, and the Encyclopædists, while that of Job has more in common with the prophets and the mystics, with Augustine or Paul or Christ. Prometheus can predict that Zeus will be destroyed, but his monotheism prevents Job from entertaining any such thought of Yahweh. Job is also more modest than Prometheus in the extent of the control over nature which he ascribes to man, while Faust found his greatest relief in such practical activities. Faust is perhaps the most daring of the three in his defiance of the spirit of fear, which says that man shall go thus far and no farther in his attempts to bring more of his fate within his own control.

What right has man to question the ways of God? In asserting man's right to ask God to justify His ways to him the book of Job without doubt marks the topmost peak of moral grandeur and dignity in biblical literature. But Job does not do this in a flippant or irreverent spirit. The old sage grants that nature is unsearchable, but he is not willing to concede by analogy that moral truth is unknowable. William Hale White has wrestled with the same problem in the *Deliverance of Mark Rutherford.* Agreeing that no special revelation was vouchsafed to Job and that the only answer which Job could obtain was the labored product of his own thought, Rutherford comes to the conclusion that the only way to make human life tolerable in the present universe of apparent disorder is to lay the blame for its seeming contradictions on the limitations of man's knowledge. "The world is immense, constructed on no plan or theory which the intellect can grasp." But the real issue is not, it would seem, whether the mind of man can exhaust the mystery, but whether it has a right of search for an explanation. Does God say to the intellect, "Hands off"? Our understanding is that Job says "No," and says it in no uncertain voice. He admits that he does not and never will understand wholly but he insists upon the right of inquiry. Human reason may not be able to get at the bottom of the external world while some of its factors remain inaccessible to it, but how can a man live a moral life if he cannot trust his moral sense? If the moral life be obligatory upon man his nature must contain the equipment needed to answer the questions thus raised. All rebels against God have urged in justification of their revolt the claim that man can only be held morally accountable if the means of drawing moral distinctions are provided. On this fundamental issue Job will not yield.

And Job goes further. Not only does he deny that faith is blind but he asserts that only by virtue of the integrity of his moral nature and the trustworthiness of his moral sense can man believe in or worship God. If this life is all an insane dream, as Mark Twain makes Traum describe it, then no commerce between God and the spirit of man can take place. Worship is the act of a reasonable mind consenting freely in its devotion to God. It is rather interesting that Job, so far back in the history of the development of the human spirit, should deny all the false assumptions by which, in the name of religion, men have kept on tabooing freedom of inquiry. Deny that right of search and the human spirit sinks back into lethargy, and by the same token passions break out in riotous indulgence. The surest antidote for immorality is preoccupation with the search for truth.

In the Æschylean drama Prometheus never becomes reconciled to Zeus. Job does become reconciled to God, not to the God of appearances which he had denied, but to the God back of the veil of appearances. Men's thought of God must change and grow. The Greeks had to dethrone Zeus in order to win freedom, but Job succeeded in winning his freedom without sacrificing Yahweh. Religion may be content to stand still or it may incite human thought to new attainments. The one true God upon whom his travail of soul gave Job a better grasp is the God whom Jesus could call Father. In the end Goethe consigned Faust, rebel though he had been, not to hell but to heaven, where he is welcomed by the Mater Gloriosa of the Christian tradition and becomes the companion of saints like Pater Ecstaticus, Pater Profundus, and Pater Seraphinus. Goethe became wise enough to know that if religion be pure then men can be free and that without religion the wings of man's spirit are clipped. Arising in widely differing cultures and civilizations and representing different trends of thought these three dramas picture the intensity with which the human mind strives to learn how the universe wishes man to regard himself. All three have a tale to tell of values which are real, moral, and eternal, all of them realized by the slow steps of human inquiry.

Discussion Topics and Exercises

1. Study at least the three works, *Job, Faust,* and *Prometheus.*
2. Write a critical literary estimate of Job, giving your reasons for thinking it is an epic, or a drama, or a group of poems, as the case may be.
3. Compare the writings referred to in this chapter in respect to their views of God, man, evil, and their attitude toward freedom of thought, the moral integrity of man, and the right basis for a hopeful view of human life.
4. What contribution has the theory of evolution made to the solution of the problem of evil in the world?
5. Trace the influence of Job in other pieces of literature than those mentioned here.

Books to Consult

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CHAPTER XVI

THE SPEECHES OF THE BIBLE

1. Aim and Methods

Those who write do so either from an urgent need of self-expression or with the object of converting other people to their opinions. The pleasure which comes from the sense of attainment to the writer or speaker is a by-product in either case and not the end in view. Beauty is its own justification and art is not subject solely to the canons of utility. Few will subscribe to the scornful dictum of *Theron Ware* that "All art, so-called, is decay." As man's richest and most varied form of creative activity, art can never die out. Out of fidelity to his artistic ideal an obscure poet stationed on a desert island will work his lines over with as great assiduity as if he were assured of a reading by the literary world. That ideal is embraced in Ruskin's injunction, "Submit yourselves to a law which it is difficult to obey in order that you may produce a work which it is gracious to bestow."

The serious speaker, however, sets before himself another aim, that of converting the people before him to his opinions on the subject in hand. His speech may and should be a work of art in respect to such points as order and form, brevity and unity, but it will be a failure unless it is also built to the specifications required of it by the audience actually present before the speaker. The orator has a theme deemed by him worthy of the attention of a particular group, a theme on which he is convinced he has something worth hearing to say to them. His wish may be to add to their information, or to arouse their feelings in behalf of some cause and move their wills to enlist on its side. His success is to be measured by these changes of sentiment and attitude, rather than by the artistic finish of his speech or the joy which he takes in delivering it. The acid test of a speech is the changes wrought in the thinking, ideals, and attitudes of the audience. When Cicero sat down after one of his eloquent perorations his Roman senatorial colleagues applauded, but in the pause succeeding the climaxes of Demosthenes the enraged Athenians almost broke up the assembly, so impatient had they become to make war upon Philip of Macedon. This is what Lord Curzon had in mind in his reference to oratory as "the highest manifestation of the power of speech."

Persuasion is not easy to achieve. We are all naturally conservative and tend to treat new ideas as we do other strangers. For the most part, human life is carried on between the four walls of long-standing assumptions, inherited customs, ready-made ways of thinking and ingrained habits of living. Most people go back to hear only those speakers who contrive to rationalize their emotions and prejudices. Those who pronounce the shibboleths most correctly and declaim the standardized slogans most sonorously draw the largest audiences and receive the most prolonged applause. Generally speaking, people's minds are surrounded by mounted guards as sensitive as a cat's whiskers, to sound an alarm at the approach of a new idea. An advocate of change must therefore choose his ways and means carefully unto the end which he would achieve. He must establish a footing of good will between himself and his audiences, be sensitive to their every altered mood, familiar with the motives on which they act and be able to measure their mental hospitality correctly in order to succeed in his purposes.

To achieve his objects the speaker must employ an art which is at once simple and difficult. His speech must be as Cicero said, *apte, distincte, ornate.* A good speaker must decline all invitations to enter alluring by-paths of description, or to follow trails of reminiscence, or to indulge in humor that is not to the point, or even to display learning for its own sake. A speech like other forms of art is made or spoiled by what it omits as well as by what it includes. It must begin with a clear statement of theme, proceed to a judicious and well-organized presentation of opposite material to that theme, and end with an effective summary and application to the matter in hand. A serious speech which does not close on a note of sincere appeal is incomplete, but unless that appeal be based on the ground of fact and solid argument it will be futile.

In a sense, a speech does not carry as forceful an initial impact as does the printed page, for in spite of the cheap press we retain a bit of the ancient reverence for the written word. However, the speaker has certain other distinct advantages. There is first of all the asset of his presence, which in the case of a strong personality is difficult to overestimate. His gestures and the changing expression of his countenance help to convey his meaning, sometimes almost as much as do his words. The tones of his voice, its modulations, cadences, inflections, and its subtle emphases and appeals, serve as invaluable aids. "It is a great matter to know what to say and in what order to say it," writes Cicero, "but to know how to say it is a greater matter still." Of course the speaker who depends upon his glibness and his voice will soon lack for hearers; there is no effective substitute for hard facts and sound reasoning. It would be interesting to have a phonographic record of the cutting irony in Elijah's voice on Mt. Carmel, or of the staccato quality in the spoken denunciations of Amos at the festivities of Bethel, or of the note of passion in Isaiah's incisive question:

If your sins be as scarlet
Can they become white as snow?
If they be like crimson
Can they become as wool? [1]

Imagine the effective appeal which Hosea put into his tender exhortation, "Plead with your mother, plead." What would we not give to hear over again the tones used by Jesus in extending his invitation, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," words which Edmund Kean, the actor, said were so full of tears that no other man could ever speak them fittingly.

Preachers are not the only people who read the Bible in a singsong whine in complete disregard of the opportunity which it provides for the most expressive oral reading. Edmund Gosse told his students to read the Bible aloud, over and over again, because its drama, poetry, speeches, narrative and descriptive passages offer such a wide variety of material ideally adapted to the purpose. It would be hard to think of anything simpler to bring out the full meaning and effect of these passages.

Perhaps the most striking merit of the speeches found in the Bible is the adroit manner in which these orators take immediate command of the most trying situations. The first three minutes of a speech spell its success or failure. The Hebrew orators often begin with the imposing challenge, 'Hear, O Israel! Yahweh has something to say to you." Peter quieted the sneering mob in Jerusalem by an apt reference to the vision of Joel in support of his assurance that "these are not drunken as you suppose." Paul caught the attention of the Athenians by his reference to their altar to the "Unknown God," perhaps the only subject under heaven on which that cultured audience would have made a confession of ignorance.

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[1] Isaiah 1:18, the *American Translation.*

Amos cleverly held up the sins of Israel's neighbors to condemnation before he pointed out their own heinous offenses to his countrymen. Bible speakers do not over-compliment their audience nor do they put their own ego too much in evidence.

If applause be taken as the decisive criterion of the success of a speaker most of the biblical orators were failures. Hisses may be a sign, however, that a speaker has forced a realignment of ideas in the minds of his hearers—which is sometimes a much better index of success than is applause. The apostles and prophets did not usually sit down amid salvos of applause. After his Mt. Carmel speech Elijah had to run for his life; Amos was unceremoniously ordered to go back home and never again to show his face in Bethel; Isaiah's audience dwindled to a handful; Jeremiah was put into the stocks and later left to die in an abandoned cistern; Peter and Paul both suffered martyrdom. But the speeches of these men have been preserved to posterity, while the honied words of the popular orators of their day have long since been forgotten.

An Analysis of Orations and Speeches

This is a suggested form of analysis for estimating the effectiveness of a reported speech, especially the kind of speeches contained in the Bible. It does not take into account such elements as presence, gesture, voice control, and personal force. It does, however, presuppose the information available concerning the audience and the situation to which the speech was addressed.

A. Introduction
   I. The speaker and his audience
      1. Friendly attitude, *or*
      2. Barriers in the way of a friendly attitude—racial, social, political, or cultural.

II. Is the introduction effective for the purpose of
  1. Winning the attention,
  2. Feeding interest,
  3. Inducing a friendly feeling?

III. Point of contact
  1. An allusion to the present situation.
  2. A compliment to the audience.
  3. An apt story, incident or episode.
  4. Allusion to a current topic.

IV. Is the transition to the main theme an easy and natural one?

B. DEVELOPMENT OF THOUGHT

I. Forms of argument
  1. Definition of terms.
  2. Argument from experience or history.
  3. Antecedent probability.
  4. Cause to effect.
  5. Effect to cause.
  6. Deduction—general to specific argument.
  7. Induction—specific cases.
  8. Analogy.
  9. Narration and description.
  10. Other specific forms of argument.

II. Has the most judicious selection of material been made?

III. Does the speech rise to a climax?

IV. Style
  1. Unity.
  2. Coherence.
    (*a*) Of thought.
    (*b*) Of language.
  3. Clearness.
    (*a*) Simplicity.
    (*b*) Directness.
  4. Force.

V. Give a list of the figures of speech used.

C. CONCLUSION

I. Does the conclusion follow the lines of thought presented?

II. Is the argument summarized?

III. Does the speaker clinch his arguments?

IV. Application of the argument to the situation.

V. Emotional appeal.

VI. Exhortation to action.

2. GREAT BIBLICAL SPEECHES

Elijah's Address on Mt. Carmel, I Kings 18:20-40.
The True Worship of Yahweh, Isaiah 1:2-20.
The Moral Demands of God, Book of Amos.
The Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5, 6, and 7.
Peter's Address at Pentecost, Acts 2:14-36.
Paul's Speech at Lystra, Acts 14:15-18.
Paul's Athenian Address, Acts 17:22-31.
Paul Before Agrippa, Acts 26:2-29.
An "Oration on Loyalty," Book of Hebrews.
Jesus and the Samaritan Woman, John 4:5-26.

By careful study of the context the student must form the best idea possible of the circumstances under which a speech was delivered and judge it critically. Just as an archæologist can reconstruct a statue from a fragment discovered among the ruins of a city, or a comparative anatomist a prehistoric animal from a single bone, so a trained historian may take small bits of allusions found in a speech and reconstruct the living situation to which the speech is addressed. For example, in the speech attributed to Elijah and the context in which it appears, the historian finds many significant hints in regard to the character of the man, the nature of the issue between Yahweh and Baal worship, and the political circumstances of the time. And the same is true of other biblical speeches.

Elijah was the last and ablest Hebrew leader of the nomadic era. He lived at a time when his people were making the change from a life of pastoral simplicity to an urban, i.e., a more complex and well-to-do civilization. The defiling of the religion of Yahweh by a peculiarly revolting type of Phœnician Baal worship, introduced by Jezebel, Ahab's queen, the daughter of Ethbaal, King of Sidon, went on before his eyes. Elijah acted in this crisis with courage, loyalty, and dramatic vigor. His uncompromising championship of an exclusive Yahweh worship gave him the center of the stage for a period, and left such a lasting impression upon his countrymen that he remains for all time a symbol of the daring prophet.

The oration in Isaiah 1:2-20 seems to have been delivered in the reign of Hezekiah at about the time of the invasion of Sennacherib. The date would be about 701 B.C.[2] It is an incisive analysis of contemporary social and religious conditions as well as a powerful appeal to prepare for the crisis at hand.

"Amos," says Cornill, "is one of the most wonderful appearances in the history of the human spirit." This man was a shepherd of Tekoa, a hamlet twelve miles south of Jerusalem, situated on a high plateau overlooking the Dead Sea, four thousand feet below. He was also a "pincher of sycamores," a desert species of sycamore with a fruit like a fig but small and watery and eaten only by the poor. His sudden public appearance as a stern critic of the times occurred at a religious festival in Bethel about 753 B.C., during the reign of Jeroboam II, who had been able, owing to the weakness of Syria, to extend the boundaries of Israel east and north. The growth of luxury had kept pace with prosperity. Wealth had led to the oppression of the poor, the perversion of justice, the bribing of officials and dishonest business practices.

Amos arraigned those responsible for all this social corruption before the bar of the most exalted conception of God and the highest program of social justice for man that the world had yet known. In a speech that could be delivered in little more than half the time devoted to an ordinary sermon to-day he swept the old ideas of deity aside and acquainted his hearers with a God of justice, of love and of mercy, who limited His requirements of men to ethical and spiritual demands which were in keeping with His own righteous character. He surprised them with a declaration that worship which was insincere and hollow was an insult to God, that special privilege involved special obligation, and that social justice was the first qualification which God required of His worshipers. He became the foremost herald of ethical monotheism that the world has yet produced.

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[2] Although some would date this speech in the reign of Ahaz, during Isaiah's earlier years, the view here taken is held by Cheyne, Driver, G. A. Smith and others.

Here is an oration of distinguished literary merit. Worth mention is its remarkable breadth of human interest and its extensive knowledge of foreign peoples. Wide acquaintance with current social conditions, acute observation of men and things, and adroit tact in meeting a difficult situation are other of its characteristics. The prophet begins by denouncing the shortcomings of foreign nations, so as to win his hearers' assent, and then, taking swift leave of them, he strikes home at the sins of Israel. He employs every device of the orator—questions, apostrophes, exclamations, repetitions, homely figures of speech, and varied imagery. Yet his style is grave and measured; his sentences are well balanced and marked by an even rhythm and flowing movement which rises at times to lyric outbursts. According to Robinson he uses "the purest and most classical Hebrew in the Old Testament." Such a mastery of material combined with a dramatic delivery and a forceful personality must have produced a remarkable effect on the people.

The Sermon on the Mount, which is not really a speech but a collection of sayings, is a shining example of the pointed and condensed style of Jesus. It contains fifty-six separate figures of speech, many word-pictures, and makes effective use of parallelism.

It was at Pentecost, a joyous thanksgiving festival day at the close of the harvest season, that Peter gave his famous speech to one of the throngs gathered at Jerusalem. When the ecstatic witnessing of the followers of Jesus was mistaken for intoxication he turned the edge of the accusation by identifying this "speaking in tongues" with Joel's prophecy of the pouring out of God's spirit which would occur in the days of the Messiah. From this vantage point he continued to make skillful use of Old Testament prophecy in which his hearers believed, to establish the messiahship of Jesus, and to point out that any one of them could be acquitted of his share of the corporate responsibility for the crucifixion of Jesus by personal repentance. As a result of the speech three thousand recruits were added that day to the band of Nazarenes.

Paul's versatility as a speaker may be seen from the three examples listed above. His forceful personality and burning eloquence made such a deep impression at Lystra that he was saluted as the god Mercury and his companion, Barnabas, as Jupiter. According to a folk-story, Mercury and Jupiter once visited this section of Asia Minor. Most of the people proved inhospitable but an old couple named Philemon and Baucis entertained them as best they could on their simple fare. The city was destroyed for its inhospitality, but Jupiter granted the request of the old couple to spare them and let them serve the guardians of his temple and die together in old age. As the story runs, while Philemon and his wife were standing one day in front of the temple they were changed by a sudden metamorphosis into a pair of interlacing trees. Paul, however, would have none of their mistaken reverence and immediately sought to turn their thoughts from himself to the living God who sends the rain that makes the land fruitful. He showed his wisdom in making this reference, for he knew that his hearers worshiped Cybele, the mother goddess, who, as they thought, gave the rain which was so welcome at the close of the long dry seasons.

The address before Agrippa is a model defense—respectful but not over-deferential, clear, definite, and convincing. The Athenian address of Paul meets a very different kind of situation, one created by a highly sophisticated audience. Paul by his respectful allusion to the "Unknown God," which was the very God he represented, won the immediate and interested attention of the cultured Athenians.

The Book of Hebrews

Because the book of Hebrews lacks the usual marks of an epistle it will be treated here as an oration. On this point Goodspeed says, "The language of Hebrews shows more elegance and finish than any other book of the New Testament. Its author was a trained student and thinker. What he wrote is so eloquent as to be more like an oration than a letter, and the absence of any superscription such as letters usually have makes it seem all the more oratorical."[3] Very little, indeed, is known as to author, date, or audience. The oration seems to have been delivered or written during the reign of Domitian for the purpose of reassuring or sustaining Christians who were facing persecution. Apollos and Barnabas have been suggested as possible authors; Harnack thought Priscilla was the writer, and others have named Philip of Cæsarea. One thing is certain, its author is acquainted with the Philonic type of thinking, which attempts to form a blend between Old Testament religion and Greek philosophy. Throughout the document runs the antithesis between the eternal world of reality, corresponding to the *Nous* or Idea of Plato, and the world of material things which was only its shadow or copy. Here Christ and Christianity correspond to the eternal world of reality and the things of Judaism to the type or shadow. Originally the production bore no title; it was not until the second century that the caption, "To the Hebrews," was added.

The speaker, wishing to safeguard the loyalty of his hearers, pictures the greatness of their faith and emphasizes its superiority to the Old Testament religion.

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[3] Quoted from Purinton and Purinton, *The Literature of the New Testament,* p. 123.

Some are inclined to interpret the sermon as an effort to keep Jewish Christians from lapsing into Judaism. Christianity's offer of free and unhindered personal access to God is contrasted with the stress put upon formal worship and priestly mediation in the Old Testament. The book divides naturally into two parts: first, ten chapters to show the superiority of the Gospel to the religion of the Old Testament, and secondly, three concluding chapters of exhortations to faith and courage.

JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

Obviously this is not an oration, since it is characterized by the greater freedom of discourse allowed in conversation. Yet many of the principles of the oration are illustrated in it, and it is so good an example of the Fourth Gospel's conception of Jesus' teaching as to be worthy of special study. The following analysis shows its educational framework:

The scene

The stone wall of Jacob's well, Sychar, 27 A.D.

The characters

Jesus, the teacher; the Samaritan woman, the pupil.

Factors in the relation between teacher and pupil

Racial prejudice, the teacher being a Jew, the pupil a Samaritan.
Religious prejudices for generations.
Class prejudices, Jesus being a rabbi, the woman a peasant.

Introduction

1. Method—Asks of her a favor.
   Arouses her curiosity:
   - (*a*) "If thou knewest . . . who saith unto thee."
   - (*b*) Hints of a great and unknown gift, verse 10.
   - (*c*) Invitation to ask from him a favor in return, verse 10.
2. Result—(*a*) A friendly footing is established.
   - (*b*) Interest is aroused and sustained.
   - (*c*) Progressively closer attention secured.
   - (*d*) The pupil's mind is made receptive.

Principles of instruction

1. The discussion method. Jesus speaks seven times and the woman six.
2. From the known to the unknown, e.g., from the water in the well before her eyes to the water of life from sources unknown to her.
3. The use of irony, e.g., the remark of Jesus in answer to her claim that she had no husband.
4. The use of contrast. Worship in Jerusalem, worship "in this mountain" and worship in spirit and in truth.
5. Use of previous knowledge as one of the piers in throwing the bridge of instruction across to new truth, e.g., Jesus' use of his pupil's ideas of the coming Messiah.
6. Induces the woman to arrive at conclusions rather than dictating them himself.

Net results

1. Intellectual—a truer point of view of the Messiah and of the nature of worship.
2. Moral—a resolution to mend her ways.
3. Social—the pupil tells the good news to her townspeople.

FOR STUDY AND COMPARISON

The following list is intended to be suggestive only. There are many other orations, of course, which might with profit be compared with the biblical examples.

Mark Antony's Funeral Oration, Shakespeare, *Julius Cæsar,* Act. II.
Beecher's Liverpool Oration, *Orations from Homer to McKinley,* Vol. 17.
Webster's Orations.
Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.
PHILLIPS, WENDELL, The War for the Union.
HOFER, ANDREAS, Self-Defense.
PERICLES, Funeral Oration.
BROOKS, PHILLIPS, Sermons.

DISCUSSION TOPICS AND EXERCISES

1. After investigation of its background read each of these biblical speeches aloud, giving proportionate attention to thought, audience, and the purpose of the speaker.

2. Analyze each speech according to the critical analysis suggested.
3. Compare the defense of Andreas Hofer with the defense of Paul before Agrippa.
4. Compare the introduction of Beecher's Liverpool speech with that of Paul at Athens or of Peter on the day of Pentecost.
5. Select several modern sermons for comparison with the addresses of the prophets as to effectiveness.
6. What type of oratory is most effective to-day? What biblical speeches would appeal most to a modern audience?

BOOKS TO CONSULT

On Oratory

BALDWIN, C. S., *The English Bible as a Guide to Writing.*

BREES-KELLY, *Modern Speaking,* Part I, Chap. 4.

CURRY, S. F., *Vocal and Literary Interpretation of the Bible.*

MOSHER, J. A., *Complete Course in Public Speaking.*

O'NEILL AND WEAVER, *The Elements of Speech.*

WOOLBERT, C. H., *The Fundamentals of Speech.*

Biblical References

BEWER, J. A., *The Literature of the Old Testament;* see discussion of the prophets.

ECKMAN, GEORGE P., *The Literary Primacy of the Bible,* Chap. 2.

DUHM, B., *The Book of the Twelve;* see on Amos.

GORDON, A. R., *The Prophets of the Old Testament.*

MOULTON, R. G., *The Literary Study of the Bible,* Book IV, Chap. 12.

MCFADYEN, J. E., *A Cry for Justice;* see on Amos.

SMITH, GEORGE A., *The Minor Prophets;* in Expositor's Bible.

CHAPTER XVII

LETTERS AND ESSAYS

1. THE NATURE OF THE ESSAY

THE essay is one of the most elusive and most charming of literary products. A first-rate essay extends to its readers an invitation to spend a worth-while hour in the atmosphere of wisdom and culture, which pertains to people of significant and interesting experiences. Essays and letters are among the most subjective of all types of literature. "The essay as a literary form resembles the lyric in so far as it is moulded by some central mood—whimsical, serious, or artistic."[1] The term essay is comparatively modern, dating from the time of Montaigne. In the sense in which he used the word *essais*, it meant "a trial attempt, or endeavor." Montaigne modestly felt that his essay treatment of any subject was tentative and incomplete, but Dr. Johnson contemptuously characterized the essay as a "loose sally of the mind, an irregular undigested piece, not a regular and orderly performance." Modern writers, on the other hand, have used the essay as a convenient medium for the brief and suggestive treatment of all sorts of subjects and have developed it to a perfection of form and finish second to none.

It is evident, then, that there are no essays in the Bible, but it would be surprising if the literary equivalent of this modern form should not be found in ancient literature. To a certain extent the written oration gave opportunity for passages approaching this form of subjective expression. Ancient historical works are studded with literary speeches which were never delivered by the men to whom they were attributed, but were creations produced by the fertile invention of such writers as Thucidydes, Suetonius, and Tacitus. Most of these speeches were critical or eulogistic summaries of a given historical situation. As time went on, however, the letter or epistle became the favorite vehicle for presenting a brief or tentative treatment of a not too imposing subject or experience. The epistle of ancient times is a distinct literary species with well-defined qualities of its own. Authentic collections have come down to us of the letters of Isocrates, Plato, Epicurus, and other outstanding figures of the Græco-Roman world. Among the best known of these are the letters of Cicero. Some scholars draw a sharp distinction between the literary epistle and genuine letters, and insist that no logical and formal treatise can rightfully be called a letter. This style of epistolary essay was the form used by Cicero in perfecting his Latin prose style.

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[1] Alexander Smith, "Dreamthorpe"; quoted from Tanner, *Essays and Essay Writing*, p. xx.

In modern times the essay type of letter is much indebted for its popularity to the rise of journalism. One of the features in the early days of newspapers was the publication of news-letters from various cities on all sorts of topics. In London the production of such letters for English country papers became a regular calling. The writers would gossip about the habitués of the coffee shops, collect reports and items of interest about the food markets, give the details of an interesting trial at the Sessions House, or even gain admission to Whitehall, so as to describe the doings of the king and dukes and what they wore. The temptation to use these letters as a medium for expressing personal opinions on matters of state and society was too strong to be resisted. During periods of strict government censorship, such as that of the Restoration, letter writers would pirouette gayly over the boundary line set by the censor and thoroughly exasperate the government by their quirks and grimaces at the things which the king had tabooed. At last the government gave up all attempts at control and this victory gave the news writers new boldness and prestige. It was from their comments on the passing scene that what we know as the newspaper editorial was evolved. It in turn became one of the most popular ways of "thinking in public." Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift brought it to a high degree of perfection. As the editorial extended its scope to wider fields of interest, embracing all sorts of social as well as political topics, it attained to the dignity of the editorial essays which Steele and Addison wrought out so admirably in the *Spectator* and *Tatler*, respectively. Such a charming new literary medium, of course, must needs find a permament place in literature.

The primary merit of an essay or letter is the glimpses which it affords into the mind of the writer. In the introduction to his own book of essays, Montaigne says, "It is myself I portray." Buffon's statement, *"Le style c'est l'homme,"* reaches its fullest measure of truth in the essay. As we read the essays of such men as Thackeray, Hazlitt, and Stevenson we are not so much interested in the theme or content as in getting acquainted with these men themselves. Lamb's essay on "Old China" does not teach us a great deal about porcelain, but we learn much from it about Lamb and his likes and dislikes. There is an ancient saying which Demetrius traces back to Artemon, the editor of Aristotle's letters, to the effect that "a letter is the half of a conversation." It is the elusive element of intimacy which gives to this literary form its indefinable charm. We feel that the writer is not keeping his ear alert for eavesdroppers, but is pouring out his soul without restraint to the one to whom he is writing. If a trace of insincerity creeps in it is readily detected. Perhaps no one has ever been more utterly frank than the Apostle Paul. In his epistles the passions, the loyalty, and the tugging of the heartstrings of the great missionary are laid bare. He has no time for the niceties of style, so intent is he on communicating true impressions of the experiences of his own mystical and storm-tossed soul.

A second characteristic of the essay is its lack of rigidity. It is as free as conversation, a sort of literary go-as-you-please. Although coaches are the subject of one of Montaigne's essays he has much to say about sneezing, the entertainments of the Roman emperors, and the conquest of Mexico. Very rarely does the essay hold itself to the logical sequence and fixed outline of a scientific treatise. The essays of Emerson and Carlyle are profound but we do not read them as we would read a chapter in a volume of philosophy. The essay has the same latitude in regard to tone, which may alternate at will between the grave and serious and the light and whimsical. While Paul, like Ruskin, is always serious he skips and jumps from one phase of his thought to another and introduces changes of mood in an almost bewildering way. He did not write these letters to the churches in that atmosphere of leisure which Bacon thought so essential to the essay, but dictated them between times or on his journeys as a part of a crowded day's work. They bear the marks of this hasty composition, but they throb with the energy of the life which their author was leading.

2. PAUL THE WRITER

At the time of the trial of the Scillitan martyrs the following conversation is reported to have taken place:

> Saturninus, the Pro-consul: "What are the things in your chest?"
>
> Speratus: "Books and epistles of Paul, a just man."

In the mosaics of the Arian baptistery at Ravenna, Paul is represented as standing beside the throne of Jesus with two rolls of parchment in his hands. In the words of

Jülicher he was "the creator of the Christian literature." "The most prominent figure of all the great men who have adorned or advanced the interests of the Christian church" was the first to make use of the written message to propagate the faith. What Socrates was to Plato, Jesus was to Paul.

Paul left his impress upon the world in the fifth and sixth decades of the first century of our era. He was the son of a Jew who was a Roman citizen and was reared in a dignified Jewish home in Tarsus. After completing his studies under the great rabbi Gamaliel, he arose to prominence in rabbinic circles in Jerusalem, and may even have been a member of the Sanhedrin. The dramatic story of his conversion to Christ has been preserved, but little or nothing concerning the first fifteen years of his activity as a Christian. For information in regard to the last fifteen years of his life we are indebted to his letters and to the account of him given by Luke in Acts. Luke, who was a Greek physician and fellow-traveler with Paul, gives a fairly accurate picture of the apostle's achievements and services. Paul regarded Christ as the risen Savior revealed to him on the way to Damascus, and the one passion of his life was to make him known to the Greek and Roman world. To this end he planted churches, trained leaders, created organizations, and supervised the development of the new movement with such insight and energy, and with such practical statesmanship as have rarely been equaled and never surpassed. His work was far-reaching in conception, striking in practical efficiency, and almost unparalleled in the sheer amount of energy expended in its furtherance. More than anyone else he pioneered the way for the new faith into its legitimate sphere and the exercise of its destined function. He made the gospel of Jesus at home to the Greek world of thought. He amalgamated in his own culture and experience the best in the various intellectual and spiritual resources of the Græco-Roman world—the Platonic philosophy, Stoicism and the Mystery cults—and fused the elements thus derived into a new product known to us as Greek Christianity. To do this he had to depart from the simplicity of Jesus and introduce into the church a line of theological speculation which has not proved wholly profitable. But imperfect as, no doubt, Pauline Christianity is, none can deny its creator's sincerity and forcefulness.

As a by-product of his labors he wrote the letters contained in the New Testament. There were no written gospels yet, for disciples were living and telling the story of Jesus orally. If there existed any written collection of Jesus' sayings at the time, it would be Matthew's *Logia* in the Aramaic language, which Greek-speaking peoples could not read. During this period preceding the circulation of any written "Life of Christ," Paul's letters gave wide currency to his own interpretation of Christ's meaning for mankind, which was so different from that of the rest of the disciples as to seem something else entirely. These letters, therefore, constitute the earliest literature produced by the Christian movement, which did not perish with the age in which it was written.

Paul was tremendously in earnest. His letters portray a man with few points in common with Benson's picture of the essayist speaking "aloud the slender and whimsical thoughts that come into his mind when he is alone on a winter evening before a warm fire and closing his book." He dictated and dispatched these letters as broadsides in his fight against principalities and powers of evil or to disabuse the minds of his converts of dangerous errors, into which they had fallen. In him the ethical idealism of the prophets and the constructive urge of the pioneer were fused.

The circumstances under which these letters were composed have left their marks on them. They were written hastily to relieve difficult situations in specific churches, to combat actual errors which would cost dearly if not cured, and to give comfort and guidance to confused and troubled souls. This accounts for that aspect of urgency and quality of impulsiveness in them, which no reader can fail to notice. "Paul's letters, even that to the Romans," says Bousset, "must be read as outpourings from the heart of an impulsive prophet-like personality, and not as dialectic didactic writings."[2] But in spite of faults due to their hasty construction—incomplete sentences, numerous ellipses, too weighty clauses and involved sentences—they possess a strength of human appeal which is arresting. Paul's vices are the defects of his virtues. He confesses to the Corinthians that he is a "layman in speech," i.e., that he does not follow the rules of rhetoric taught by the sophists. His method of arriving at truth at times is intuitive rather than logical; his associations of ideas are often unusual, drawing attention to relations or implying connections not ordinarily perceived. Withal he is a mystic and his intuitions of truth are difficult for the non-mystical mind to comprehend. Combine this mystic-mindedness with his brilliant imagination, his dynamic personality, his unbounded zeal and crusading passion and it is not difficult to understand why the movement of his thought sometimes baffles us, and the language in which he casts it refuses to give up its secret. But perhaps these very intricacies are necessary elements in Paul's literary style, which is, as Ramsay points out, in full accord both with his far-ranging subjects and his own peculiar personality. Unstudied the words may be, but they are in harmony with the theme. A man as finely trained in the turns of the language as von Wilamowitz speaks of the great relief one feels in passing from Hellenistic Greek and its wearisome artificialities to the unadorned simplicity of Paul:

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[2] **W. Bousset, *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, 32, col. 358.**

> That this Greek of his has no connection with any school or model [he says], that it streams as best it may from the heart in an impetuous torrent, and yet is real Greek . . . makes him a classic of Hellenism. Now at least one can hear again in Greek the utterance of an inner experience, fresh and living. . . . It is only judging by very false and artificial standards that Paul can appear a speaker destitute of power and charm, effective only as a transcendent miracle. Simply as eloquence or literature I Corinthians 13 is superior to anything in Dio Chrysostom.[3]

Paul's style presents interesting contrasts to that of Jesus. Jesus draws upon the field and vineyard and the sun-swept hills, upon nature's great outdoors, for his figures and illustrations, while Paul thinks only in terms of social life and institutions. The sentences of Jesus are short and epigrammatic, like those of the Hebrew *mashal,* while Paul's are longer and more labored. The thought of Jesus is simple, direct, clear and limpid, while that of Paul is complex, involved and sometimes turgid. Both are fond of striking paradoxes and use them with telling effect. Jesus is the more calm and Paul perhaps the more eloquent. Paul quotes from the Old Testament more frequently, but allows himself a good deal of latitude both in paraphrasing and interpreting it. His treatment of Old Testament passages is rabbinic in pattern, as witness the allegory of Hagar and Sarah in Galatians and the fine point with reference to the plural and singular of "seed" in Galatians 3:16-17. He makes obvious slips in his reasoning sometimes, notably in his argument for the veiling of women in I Corinthians 11:2-16. His symbols and allegories occasionally are not to the point, because his general underlying conception is at fault: he resorts to forced meanings to strengthen his case where the ordinary meanings fail him. Paul is lacking in a certain transparency of thought and mode of expression which we so much admire in Jesus. He does not keep the pathway of his thinking as well defined as does Jesus. His plainer letters to the Thessalonians and the Philippians win more favor than do such dialectic epistles as Galatians and Romans. These have merits of their own but not the same literary beauty.

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[3] In the *Quarterly Review,* July, 1910, p. 219.

Brilliant passages are not infrequent. In I Corinthians 13 a spontaneous rhythm ascends to remarkable heights. "Since the hymn of Cleanthes," says Norden, "nothing at once so heartfelt and magnificent has been written in Greek."[4] The first four chapters of I Corinthians are masterpieces of appeal, irony, and delicate humor, adapted to the purpose of self-defense. The fifteenth chapter of I Corinthians presents a most interesting study of the effects obtainable by the use of progressive emphasis and rhetorical climax, as the following outline indicates:

Verse 11.	First climax.
" 12-27.	Body of argument.
" 28.	Second climax.
" 29-34.	Lull for meditation.
" 35-54.	Final ascent in argument.
" 55.	Final climax.
" 56-58.	Peroration and appeal.

Note the balance of phrase and accented rhythm in verses 42-44:

And so it is with the resurrection of the dead:
It is sown corruptible,
It rises incorruptible;
It is sown inglorious,
It rises in glory;
It is sown in weakness,
It rises in power;
It is sown an animate body,
It rises a spiritual body.

---

[4] Von Norden, quoted from Kent, *Work and Teaching of the Apostles*, p. 128.

The final climax (15:54-57) is worth quoting here:

> But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption,
> And this mortal shall have put on immortality,
> Then shall come to pass that saying which was written,
> Death is swallowed up in victory.
>
> O Death, where is thy victory,
> O Death, where is thy sting:
> The sting of death is sin:
> The power of sin is the law:
> But thanks be to God,
> Who giveth us the victory through
> Jesus Christ our Lord.

It was long the fashion for scholars to be very critical of Paul's literary style, on the score of its departures from the classical Greek, but now the pendulum has swung the other way, for it has recently been learned that it is in full accord with the freer usages customary in correspondence of his day. Foakes-Jackson, one of his latest and most scholarly biographers, defends him thus:

> Paul has repeatedly been reproached with the crudeness of his construction, the occasional clumsiness of his sentences, his barbarous Greek generally. His critics have undoubtedly erred on the side of severity; for his letters bear the stamp of good literature in their essential qualities. . . . And no one can charge any letter of the apostle with the most serious fault of dullness. Paul is always interesting and constantly uses phrases which have stood the test of time.[5]

We shall close this appreciation of Paul as a writer with Carlyle's word: "That autograph letter, it was once all luminous as a burning beacon, every word of it a live coal, in its time: it was once a piece of the fire and light of Human Life, that Letter."

3. PAUL'S LETTERS

Philemon	I Corinthians 1-4, 12-15
Philippians	Galatians

Romans

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[5] F. J. Foakes-Jackson, *The Life of St. Paul*, p. 276.

This order is not intended to be chronological but to lead from the simpler and more personal letters to the more formal and didactic epistles. Philemon is the shortest, simplest and most personal of them all and is a real letter. Philemon, a wealthy member of the church at Colossæ, had a slave named Onesimus, who stole some property and fled from his master. In due course the runaway came to Rome, was converted by Paul and became the apostle's servant and friend. Paul is now sending him back to Philemon, whom he asks to receive him not as a slave only but as a brother. After some delicate personal allusions Paul makes a skillful appeal on behalf of the slave. Particularly happy is Paul's suggestion, which is not to be taken too seriously, that whatever loss Philemon has suffered on account of Onesimus should be charged up to him—then a "prisoner of the Lord" in Rome. Parenthetically, Paul reminds him "that you owe me your very self besides."

It may be well to compare this letter with Lincoln's letter to Mrs. Bixby:

> DEAR MADAM:
>
> I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement and leave you only the cherished memory of the lovely and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice on the altar of freedom.
>
> Yours very sincerely and respectfully,
> ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

Philippians is a warmly personal letter from Paul to his first-born European church, written from Rome during his imprisonment, about 62 A.D. He had founded the church on his second missionary journey and it had been unusually devoted to him. When the brethren at Philippi heard of Paul's imprisonment they sent gifts and expressions of devotion to him by one of their number, Epaphroditus, who became sick and remained for a time with Paul. When he recovered and started for home Paul dispatched with him this letter, which proved to be his last letter to any church. Polycarp referred to it in a letter which he wrote to this same church, as follows: "And when absent from you he [Paul] wrote a letter which, if you carefully study, you will find to be the means of building you up in the faith which has been given to you and which, being followed by hope and preceded by love towards God and Christ and our neighbor, 'is the mother of us all.' "[6]

It is a very personal and practical letter. While it contains no direct quotations from the Old Testament, expressions reminiscent of the Psalms occur. A number of striking figures of speech are used, such as that of the racer (3:14). The letter lays bare some of the most sacred thoughts of Paul's heart; it is like the farewell benediction of a saintly soul, the vesper hour of a noble life. Although it is Paul's last unquestioned letter it "bears no evidence of slackened force or wavering insight. We shut up the story of his days with the impression of mental and religious fullness, which so far from being on the point of degenerating seems rather to combine the riper experience and grasp of age with something of youth's vigor."[7]

Paul wrote his first letter to Corinth to settle a number of disturbing problems concerning the observance of communion, the resurrection of the dead, the eating of meats offered to idols, and above all the division of the church into parties, giving allegiance to Paul, Peter, Apollos, and Christ, respectively. It will repay anyone to analyze critically the account in the first four chapters of the conflicting emotions which these divisions in Corinth stirred up in Paul.

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[6] Polycarp, *Epistle to the Philippians*, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. I, p. 33.

[7] James Moffatt, *The Historical New Testament*, p. 124.

Galatians was written to a group of neighboring churches, which Paul founded on his first missionary journey—Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe—churches in which the Judaistic controversy first arose and also attained its most virulent form.[8] The Judaizers demanded that when Gentiles became Christians they should be circumcised and begin to conform to Jewish law; Paul contended that the gospel freed men from such Jewish requirements and that Gentiles could be saved by faith alone, regardless of their failure to observe Jewish social and ceremonial customs. The letter is an answer to two specific attacks of the Judaizers upon Paul, the first assailing his claim to be an apostle and the second the validity of his gospel. In reply he stresses his conversion experience, recalls the agreement reached at the Jerusalem council, and vehemently declares that "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but faith working through love" (5:6). The sentences used are short and concise and the argument passionate and impulsive. There are many rhetorical questions asked, and distinctively Pauline phrases are numerous.

Romans, which was written from Corinth on the third missionary journey, is Paul's most complete statement of his faith. It does more calmly and fully what Galatians did in the heat of controversy. It was written to Christians whom Paul had never seen, and perhaps for that reason contains his fullest statement of his religious philosophy. Romans and Galatians were the favorite books of Luther; they became the textbooks of the Reformation and thus gave its characteristic tone to Protestant theological thought.

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[8] The author accepts the so-called "South Galatian" theory. For critical discussion see McGiffert, *Apostolic Age*, p. 172 ff.; Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller*, Chaps. 5, 7, 8; Peake, *Introd.*, Chap. 3; etc.

FOR STUDY AND COMPARISON

BENSON, A. C., *The Silent Isle,* Chap. 20, "The Sense of Sin."
CICERO, Epistle to Servius Rufus, *Harvard Classics,* Vol. 8, p. 175.
MACAULAY, T. B., Essay on Milton.
CARDINAL MERCIER, Letter to the Belgian People, Christmas, 1914.

There is an immense amount of material, both essays and letters, for comparative study. Cicero's letter, which he wrote to his friend Servius Rufus on the death of his daughter, may be compared with Philemon, and Scipio's Dream with Romans. Cardinal Mercier's letter, which he wrote to his people during the invasion of Belgium, is a noble utterance of religion and patriotism partaking somewhat of Paul's fervor. The letters of Oliver Cromwell supply further interesting material for comparison.

DISCUSSION TOPICS AND EXERCISES

1. Compare the essay and the oration as literary forms and pass judgment upon Paul's skill in their use.
2. Make outlines of Galatians and Romans.
3. Draw up a list of Paul's quotations from the Old Testament. His quotations from Greek Literature.
4. List some examples of his principal figures of speech, analogies, allegories, and special kinds of argument.
5. Discuss Paul's letters from the standpoint of the insight which they give into his character and personality. Can you name other writers who possess similar personal characteristics?

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On the Essay

BALDWIN, C. S., *The English Bible as a Guide to Writing.*
ELEANOR, SISTER M., *The Literary Essay in English.*
HEYDRICK, B. A., *Types of the Essay.*
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TANNER, W. M., *Essays and Essay Writing,* Introd.

On Paul

BURTON, E. D., *Handbook of the Life of the Apostle Paul.*
DEISSMANN, ADOLF, *Saint Paul.*
HAYES, D. A., *Paul and His Epistles.*

Foakes-Jackson, F. A., *The Life of St. Paul.*
Jones, Rufus, *St. Paul the Hero.*
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